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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MARCH 22, 1993 · $2.95

MODERN HATE

From India to Bosnia, the prevailing cliché is that ancient enmities are now being unearthed.

But what if they've just been invented?

Rudolph and Lloyd I. Rudolph

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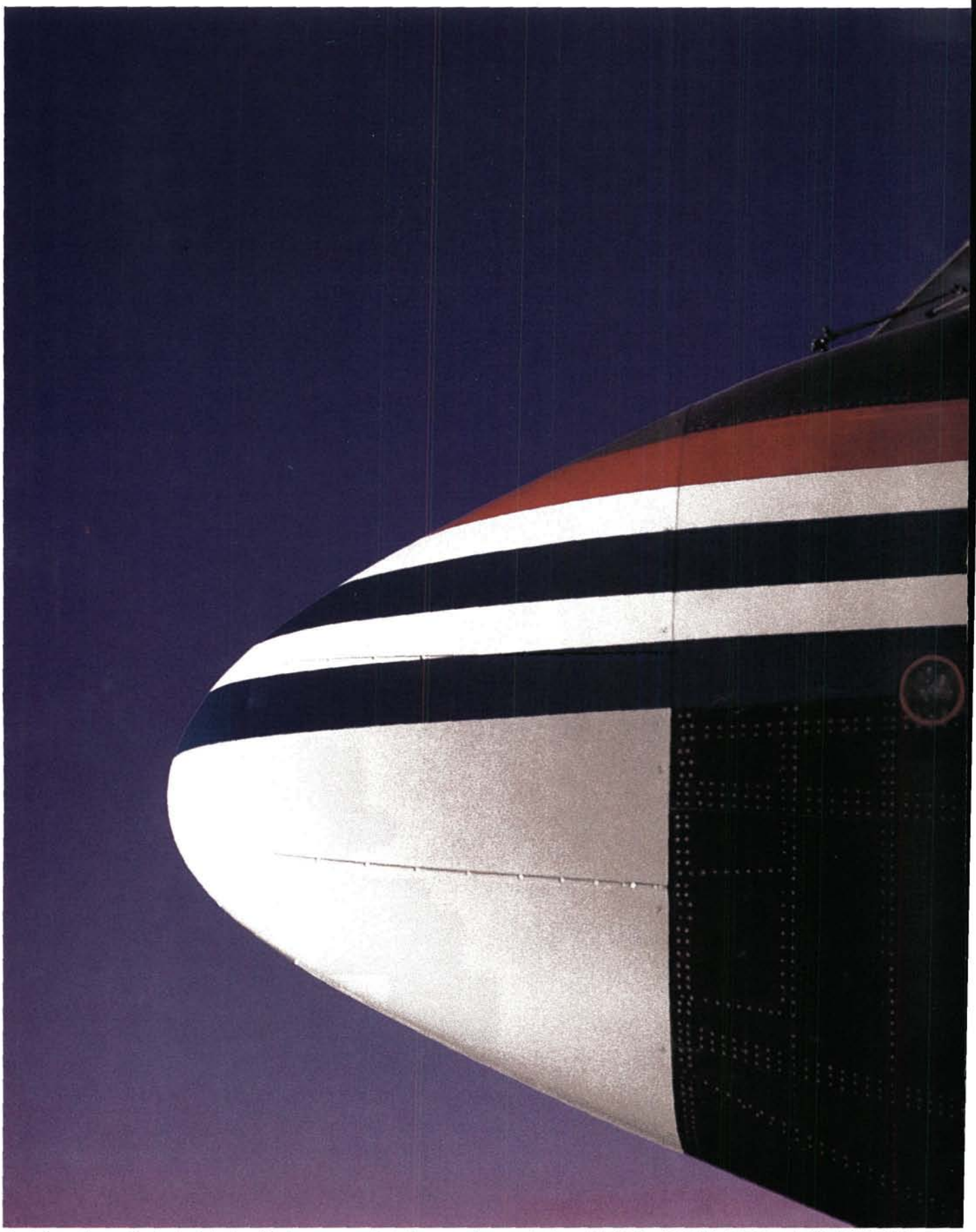

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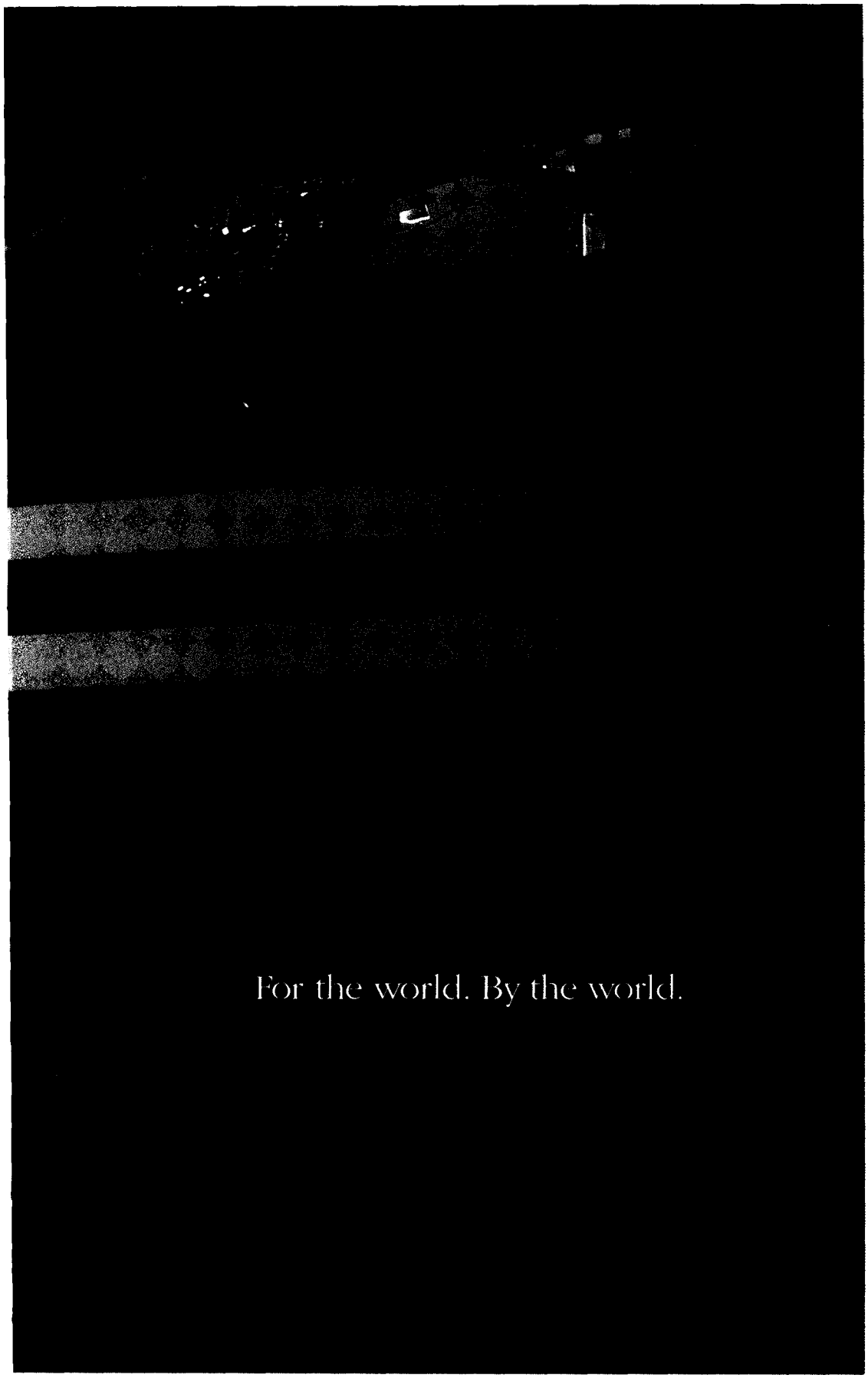

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FROM WASHINGTON

Street hassle

"There is no way to interpret such expressions as 'great tits' or 'fuck you' . . . as political comments that contribute directly or indirectly to the general discourse about public affairs."

The latest issue of the prestigious *Harvard Law Review* features a sixty-page article by Northwestern law professor Cynthia Grant Bowman on the "street harassment" of women. Bowman argues that "wolf-whistles, sucking noises and catcalls" directed at women in public places—as well as comments that "range from 'Hello, baby' to vulgar suggestions and outright threats"—are part of a "spectrum of means by which men objectify women and assert coercive power over them." She wants to make these things illegal, or at least subject the harassers to civil lawsuits.

Bowman would seem to offer conservative curmudgeons their fattest target since a liberal judge in New York ruled that beggars had a constitutional right to panhandle in the subways. Her article amply displays many of the annoying aspects of "feminist jurisprudence." There is, first, the tendency to exaggerate the harm done by male misbehavior. "[A]ny incident of harassment, no matter how 'harmless,'" is held to reinforce fear of rape "by demonstrating that any man may choose to invade a woman's personal space, physically or psychologically . . ." Bowman also implies that men cannot understand what it feels like for a woman to be sexually taunted. In keeping with this assumption, she cites *The Washington Post*'s Courtland Milloy as "one woman" who has eloquently recounted the evils of harassment. Last time I checked, Milloy was a man. And Bowman ignores the possibility that a "reasonable woman" might ever *want* men to hit on her.

Take it away, Rush Limbaugh. Or, rather, take it away, TNR. A couple of weeks ago this magazine ran a Notebook item dismissing Bowman's article with the observation that "in a free country, being maddened is a hazard of existence."

Sometimes, though, it's too easy to be a curmudgeon. Compare Bowman's arguments with those in that New York subway panhandling case. In the latter, conservatives insisted on preserving order in public spaces, at the expense of a borderline First Amendment claim. Is the case against "street harassment" all that different? One would expect those who most loudly lament the loss of civility and public order to be the most sympathetic to Bowman's complaint. Certainly *Public Interest*-type conservatives such as James Q. Wilson, who argues for "the priority of the good over personal rights," should understand that beggars aren't the only people whose assertion of "rights" can threaten the common sphere of living. Mr. Wilson, meet Ms. Bowman.

After reading Bowman's article, I conducted an unscientific survey of female acquaintances, asking if they were in fact bothered by "street harassment." None were as distressed as Bowman is. But almost all said they were regularly harassed, at least on the "hey, baby" level. And while some claimed to enjoy the milder forms of hassling (e.g., the whistles), most said they often changed their routes in order to avoid public spaces where they thought they would be taunted.

For all her foolishness, Bowman has pointed up a severe violation of civility, one that seems to diminish public life for a large portion of the American population. The problem is what to do about it. The pursuit of civility in public spaces is a peculiarly difficult enterprise for Americans accustomed to framing legal issues in terms of conflicting rights. Quite simply, it is impossible to describe the civil ordering of the public sphere in terms of "rights," or at least in terms of the absolute speech-like rights we're used to. I'm walking down the street talking to a friend. A stranger walks up and begins to harangue me. I turn my back. He keeps haranguing. I have a "right" to be there. He has a "right" to be there too. We both have "rights." But something has to give.

Worse, the question of whether we want to restrain the haranguer inevitably hinges on the content of his expression. It makes a difference if he says, "Hello, baby," or, "Fucking bitch." It even makes a difference if he's funny or trite. The required judgment is almost aesthetic.

It won't do to simply note, with liberal communitarians such as William Galston, that "there is a gap between rights and rightness that cannot be closed without a richer moral vocabulary . . . that invokes principles of decency [and] duty." That's true. But how do we get ourselves a public sphere that reflects this decency, when we no longer have a culture that takes

continued on page 45

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The TIME SQUEEZE and how to end it

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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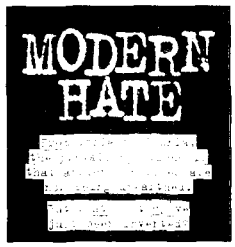

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CORRESPONDENCE

Malia mail

To the editors:

My views have often been misrepresented by TNR political writers, but a professional scholar really should know and behave better. In his defense of Russian President Boris Yeltsin's achievements ("Apocalypse Not," February 22), Martin Malia charges me with the preposterous view that "the market is an American importation, unsuited to Russian culture."

I have never held, spoken or written such an opinion, as anyone even casually familiar with my publications surely knows. In a book published twenty years ago, I lamented the forcible abolition of market relations in Soviet Russia at the end of the 1920s. In another completed before the rise of Gorbachev, I foresaw that Communist Party reformers would necessarily seek to marketize the Soviet economy. During the Gorbachev years, I argued repeatedly that marketization, if nothing else, was inexorable in the Soviet Union. And in a recent article (*The Nation*, November 23, 1992), to which Malia presumably is referring, I wrote: "In Russian economic life, the process of marketization is moving forward, however fitfully and painfully, but it hardly seems headed toward the 'free-market capitalism' endorsed by Western cheerleaders." Malia is a very passionate cheerleader, never a good role for anyone studying Russia.

STEPHEN F. COHEN
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

To the editors:

Martin Malia misrepresents my position when he says that I advocate ("explicitly," at that) dropping Boris Yeltsin for Arkady Volsky. I think that we overly personalize our foreign policy and that we should support neither Yeltsin nor Volsky, but the democratic process. In an article in *The Washington Post*, reprinted in Volsky's newspaper, I actually advocated an alliance of Yeltsin and Volsky. I criticize those like Malia who glorify and support Yeltsin and Yegor Gaidar in the name of democracy when they clearly do not have majority support with their current policies.

To suggest that Yeltsin's program has wide support, Malia now wildly exaggerates the degree of privatization in the provinces, as last year he wildly exaggerated the degree of decollectivization. More than one-half of the chief executive officers in the regions, appointed by Yeltsin and approved by the local Soviets, are former factory managers, collective farm chairmen and state farm directors—the heart of the Volsky machine—and most of the rest are former Party secretaries.

More than 52 percent of the deputies to the Russian Congress were elected in villages and towns of under 100,000 population. Does anyone really think that these people are strong supporters of the Moscow intelligentsia and shock therapy reform? But how can one have a functioning democracy if one disfranchises half the population or fails to make some concessions to their fears and insecurities?

It is time to replace wishful thinking with serious study of Russian politics. Unless Yeltsin reverses policy very quickly, we will have Aleksandr Rutskoi as Russian president within a year.

JERRY F. HOUGH
Duke University
Durham, North Carolina

Martin Malia replies:

Professor Cohen has a minor point. I should not have used "market" alone, but said instead "free-market capitalism," for this is what he rejected for Russia as alien on the "MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour" last December. Still, his notion of a market is strange, taken as it is from the Soviet NEP, where 80 percent of the non-agricultural economy was nationalized and "NEPmen" were harassed as capitalists. Professor Hough has no point in implying that Volsky's nomenklatura holdovers are democratic, and last December in the *Los Angeles Times* he clearly preferred them over the democratically elected Yeltsin.

Shining Buddhism

To the editors:

Your February 22 Notebook item on the "Defend the Life of Abimael Guzman" statement published in *The Village Voice* in January just came to my attention. (I hadn't even heard about the *Voice* ad until a friend told me about TNR's account of it.)

What happened is this: I was giving a poetry reading and book-signing at Black Oak Books in Berkeley last fall. At the end of the reading I was approached with a request to sign a statement on behalf of Guzman calling for international standards of justice to be applied in his case—no quickie execution—and the people bearing the petition assured me it was not to "defend his life" per se, or to defend or support Sendero Luminoso.

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As a Buddhist I am committed to the defense of the life and habitat of all creatures. Opposition to capital punishment is meaningless if not applied to those people who are most controversial, however repugnant their acts may have been. Opposition to the extinction of species is meaningless if not applied to those beings who are less charismatic, less seen, less obviously useful, such as the Spotted Owl.

With those thoughts, I signed. Needless to say, I am hugely annoyed to have my signature put onto additional statements that I would not support. I'll be more careful next time.

GARY SNYDER
Nevada City, California

Negative results

To the editors:

Contrary to Mickey Kaus's assertion ("The Godmother," February 15), a guaranteed income has been tried. In the mid-1970s the federal government funded the Seattle-Denver Income Maintenance Experiments (SIME/DIME), in which the effects of a negative income tax were tested in one of the largest social science experiments ever attempted. Initial results indicated that the guaranteed income reduced work effort by 10 percent to 20 percent and increased the rate of marital dissolution by more than 50 percent. Although the validity of these results continues to be debated in academic circles, their practical effect was to break what had once been the broad support for the negative income tax. The perceived disincentive effects of the guaranteed income are one of the reasons that recent anti-poverty efforts, like workfare and expansion of the earned income tax credit, have linked benefits to work.

DANIEL KLERMAN
Chicago, Illinois

Smoke and mirrors

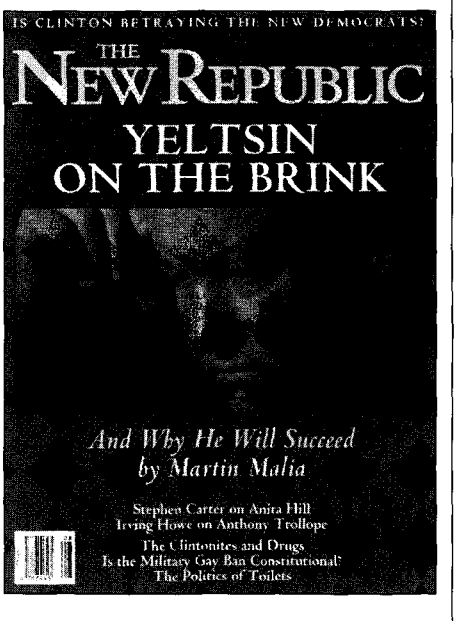
To the editors:

While your February 1 front cover restated the lofty goal of TNR's 1914 premier issue, the back cover carried a Marlboro ad. This continued a practice that began more than fifteen years ago. Tobacco giant Philip Morris faithfully buys that back cover once per month, and thereon places an ad for Marlboro or another of its many brands.

This practice is made remarkable by the fact that these ad placements have no relationship to standard marketing criteria. As any marketing professional would attest, TNR's circulation and audience demographics fall in a category well below the threshold of interest for normal promotional cigarette advertising (especially for a brand such as Marlboro). Yet industry leader Philip Morris goes on buying that monthly back cover.

So what? Cigarette companies are notoriously generous with their enormous profits, donating to a wide variety of high-profile, well-connected, politically potent entities. "Just being good corporate citizens," they say. A closer look at the pattern of cigarette company "altruism" reveals that those gifts are calculated investments going to groups and causes that can and will return the favor.

It is perfectly understandable that tobacco industry strategists would seek ways to cultivate the editorial goodwill of influential opinion journals, and what


IS CLINTON BETRAYING THE NEW DEMOCRATS?
THE NEW REPUBLIC
YELTSIN ON THE BRINK
And Why He Will Succeed
by Martin Malia
Stephen Carter on Anita Hill
Irving Howe on Anthony Trollope
The Clintonites and Drugs
Is the Military Gay Ban Constitutional?
The Politics of Toilets

better way than a regular contribution conveniently disguised as ad income? In this case, is it unreasonable to believe that P.M.'s subsidy payment to TNR might be reciprocated?

To answer that question, I searched through TNR articles for the past four years to measure the extent of coverage given to tobacco-smoking-health issues. Although this period has been marked by controversies involving such matters as ads targeted at children, cigarette manufacturer liability, nicotine addiction and the hazard posed by secondary smoke pollution, I was able to find only one TNR article on the subject: a brief 1990 editorial in which author Michael Kinsley dealt harshly with the tobacco industry, at one point expressing dismay at the "relative absence of stigma associated with the production and peddling of tobacco products." Several other articles touched peripherally on tobacco issues. In the same four-year period I found eight articles exclusively on gun control and six on capital punishment.

TNR accepts a regular subsidy from Philip Morris and in recent years has maintained a remarkably detached editorial posture on smoking and health issues. Editors will reject the implication, insisting that their individual professional conduct is entirely free from outside pressures. But TNR editors cannot afford *not* to be responsive to the fact that a tobacco subsidy is paying part of their salaries. Should they forget, a Marlboro ad will be along soon enough to remind them.

TNR should end its financial relationship with the tobacco industry.

STUART SCHMID
Health Parade
McLean, Virginia

Dress down

To the editors:

Surely I will not be alone in noting this interesting juxtaposition:

> "But at some level, the panic also stems not from fear of the other but fear of the self. It's widely accepted that the most virulent homophobes are often those troubled by their own sexuality.... The virulence with which the military disavows homosexuality is surely related to this truth."
> —"Arms and the Men," February 15

> "I begrudge no man his closets hung with gowns and chemises, but I have never seriously doubted that my own sexual impulses are full speed straight ahead, although I have sometimes wondered wistfully whether a bit of sexual ambiguity might not be a literary plus."
> —"Cross-Buying" by Michael Lewis, same issue

Please inform Mr. Lewis that he is sufficiently ambiguous, actually, to make him interesting.

DAVID A. BOXWELL
Highland Park, New Jersey

Anti-frog

To the editors:

Have your editorial standards deteriorated so far that you have nothing better to do than print shameless anti-frog "poetry" ("The Frog in the Swimming Pool" by Debora Greger, February 15)?

A better use of space would be to tell your readers how for twelve years Republican administrations refused to consider issuing a frog postage stamp, a disgusting non-performance that I hope the more activist Clinton administration will promptly remedy.

NESTLE J. FROBISH
Worldwide Fairplay for Frogs Committee
Lyndonville, Vermont

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To see the forest and the trees...

A President's Promise To a Region at Risk

The Pacific Northwest remains locked in economic and environmental gridlock. While the courts and federal agencies wrestle daily for satisfactory solutions, tens of thousands of highly skilled workers hold their breath. A vital national industry is under siege, rising lumber prices threaten the housing recovery and there is still no long term plan to protect our wildlife and the environment. In a year in which it seems our country is ready to face up to its most difficult problems, this one awaits our very best effort. We do, indeed, need to put people first.

The call for a Presidential Forest Summit is echoed by the Governors, Members of Congress, Environmental Groups, Labor Unions, the Forest Industry and the People of the Pacific Northwest.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MARCH 22, 1993

LET'S MAKE A DEAL

The trade gap continues to grow. December marked the largest monthly deficit with Japan in four years. And the once-reliable surplus with Europe proves fragile; in November and December, imports from the European Community exceeded exports. Undoubtedly these figures will be cited as cause to get tougher with Europe and Japan in trade talks. In fact, they are cause to be more magnanimous.

The reason economic exchange so pervades human activity is that it is not zero-sum: one player's gain doesn't require the other player's loss; both can win. This is as true within national economies as among them. You buy a car because it's in your interests to do so, and the seller sells because it's in her interests.

Still, there is room for relative advantage. The purchase makes sense for you so long as the price is below $10,000, and for the seller so long as the price is above $9,000. Though each of you finds any deal along that thousand-dollar spectrum better than no deal, each has a preferred end of the spectrum.

In negotiating a new version of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, we're down to that last thousand dollars. The many essentially settled issues ensure that the pact will be a step forward for the United States and the world. As tariffs and other trade barriers drop, global output will grow, perhaps by hundreds of billions of dollars. And vital U.S. interests will be served; intellectual property, for example, will draw international protection from GATT for the first time. Still, there's no call for complacency; the bargaining for relative advantage lies ahead. How much can we get?

In "An Essay on Bargaining," a classic work of game theory, Thomas Schelling noted that, oddly, the strongest bargainer may be the one whose behavior is most conspicuously constrained. Suppose that standing next to you on a car lot is a plainly deranged gunman who swears that he'll kill you if you offer more than $9,100 for the car. You are in excellent bargaining position. Any rational dealer will sell you the car at that price, the alternative being no deal.

All popularly elected politicians have guns pointed at their heads by voters. The only question is what mood the voters are in. When times are hard, voters get testy, even xenophobic, suspicious of foreign "exploitation" and of leaders who seem to abet it. So the more abysmal your economy, the better bargaining position your nation is in, so long as other nations clearly perceive the attendant political constraints on your leaders.

Whether fortunately or unfortunately, America doesn't hold the high cards. The worsening trade record with Japan and Europe reflects in large part a simple fact: as bad as things seem here, they're worse elsewhere. The United States is pulling out of a recession, Japan is mired in one and Germany is plunging into one. So we're importing at a brisk pace; they aren't.

And for many of our trading partners, the psychological effect of stagnation is compounded by other crises: Germany's turbulent reunification, Japan's political scandals. France, though relatively robust, sees its culture under siege from European integration. Its politically powerful farmers were feeling insecure even before the agricultural subsidies issue threatened to derail GATT talks (as it still does). When you see French farmers running wild in the streets, you can call them selfish, insular and Luddite—all of which they are—but you have to concede that their trigger fingers are itchy.

For bargaining purposes, that's what matters most. Moralizing about "fair trade" is fine, and can be a useful bargaining tool in itself. The United States should use it, especially in lowering the high tolerance for subsidies (as opposed to tariffs or quotas) in working drafts of a GATT pact. But in the end, Bill Clinton and U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor have to look beneath their own rhetoric—even morally justified rhetoric—and plainly perceive the political predicament of foreign leaders. That may mean surrendering some relative advantage within GATT (and within other trade talks). But the alternative is no deal.

A GATT deal—even a *relatively* disadvantageous GATT deal—is one of the few pieces of news likely to be greeted warmly by both the stock and bond markets, boosting the Dow Jones even as it lowers interest rates; for it will bring economic growth while relieving inflationary pressure from trade barriers. This would provide the perfect complement to Clinton's nervy domestic agenda, reducing the (necessary) risk that his bitter fiscal medicine will bring stagnation.

Selling a GATT deal at home won't be simple; American voters, though more tranquil than European and Japanese voters, remain a bit on edge. But Clinton increasingly seems to possess the requisite pedagogical skills. •

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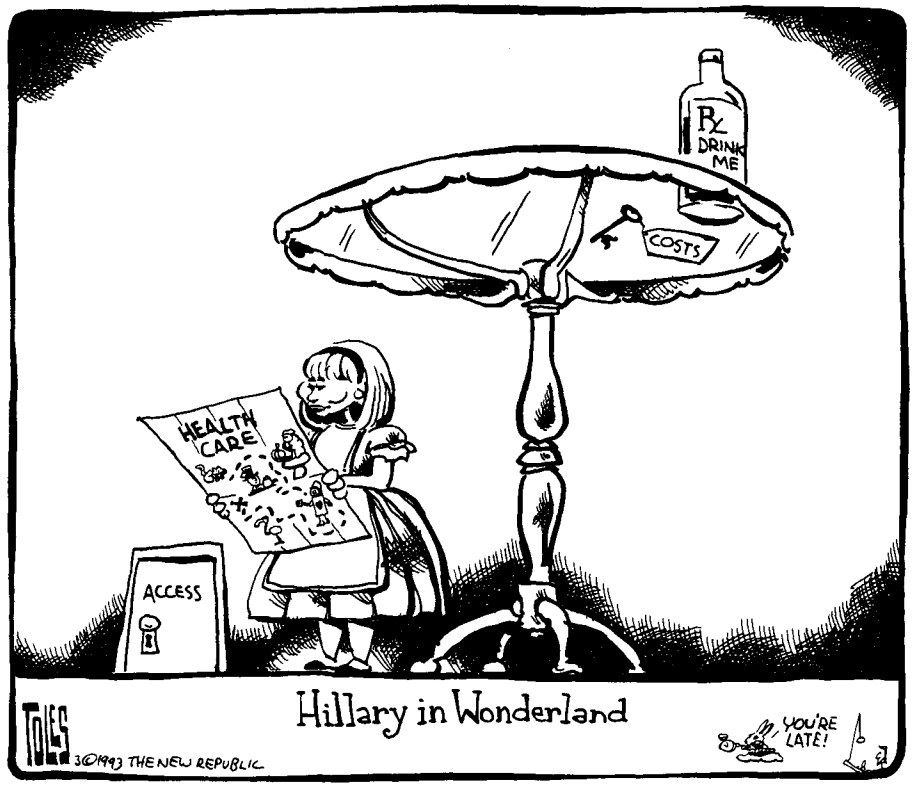
NOTEBOOK

ONE MAN, ONE VOTE FOR THE ANC: It becomes clearer by the day that what some leaders of the African National Congress mean by freedom has nothing to do with the exercise of political rights. F.W. de Klerk's National Party and the liberal Democratic Party are now trying to win support among blacks in anticipation of elections to be held before April 1994. They have, however, been forbidden from organizing in black townships. "We are saying we will not tolerate the presence of these parties in our community," said Dan Mofokeng, a leader of the ANC-affiliated National Civic Organization. "We would not ever allow our people to attend such meetings, because they are maneuvers to gain votes in the black community." Maneuvering to gain votes has another name. It's called democracy.



Hillary in Wonderland

UNHINGED: The same Hollywood types who aren't skiing in Aspen this winter don't seem to have much problem with Eric Clapton, who just won six Grammy awards. How quickly they forget. Before a Birmingham, England, concert crowd in 1976, Clapton brought up the subject of Britain's black immigrants and in no uncertain terms made known his support of noted reactionary M.P. Enoch Powell. "We should send them all back ... keep Britain white," he said. Clapton somewhat rehabilitated himself by playing at the concert for Nelson Mandela at Wembley Stadium in 1989. Just the same, he's lucky he's a pop star and not, say, the owner of a professional baseball team.

LOGICAL DEDUCTION: Writing in last week's TNR, Robert McIntyre asserted there is "no good political, let alone substantive, rationale" for the provision of the Clinton tax plan that would allow donors of appreciated assets to take their full value as a deduction from income. We agree with McIntyre that, in general, the Tax Reform Act of 1986 was a good thing and lament the plethora of loopholes that Clinton's plan has opened up. But if the loopholes are to be reopened, few are as worthy as the charitable deduction. American civic institutions, hospitals and universities, the envy of the world, are financed largely by charitable contributions. Moreover, in 1986, when the law was changed so that such contributions were no longer fully deductible, the timing could not have been worse. Museums couldn't acquire art because the dollar was low and because the market and other currencies were high. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan opened an eighteen-month window of opportunity with legislation to allow deductions for the fully appraised value of artworks, but it expired last June. The fact is that without charity-encouraging rules there are tremendous disincentives to the donation of tangible properties. Many savvy taxpayers will sell them rather than give them away because with inflation, a gift that allows a deduction of only the original cost permits the donor to deduct almost nothing. The same goes for land given to trusts such as the Nature Conservancy. If a country is to have a tax system that encourages some activities at the expense of others, charitable deductions are surely among the most fruitful. A country that counts on philanthropy to carry the costs of so much of what makes us a decent society had better encourage that philanthropy as best it can.

THE BROWN CLASS OF 2013: In a letter to all prospective parents, the Center for Early Education in West Hollywood, California, outlined the desired qualifications for a balanced nursery or grammar school class:

1. A balance of boys and girls.
2. Families from different racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups.
3. The integration of children with different personalities, learning styles and individual needs based on information gathered during interviews.
4. Children with birthdates equally represented throughout the year.
5. A mixing of first-, second- and third-born children.

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6. Families of different geographic areas.
7. Special circumstances such as single-parent families, adopted children, scholarship students and families who need day care....

Fees for the opportunity to learn amid such a rich stew run from $7,000 to $11,000 a year.

(thanks to Dr. Miriam Bertram, Los Angeles, California)

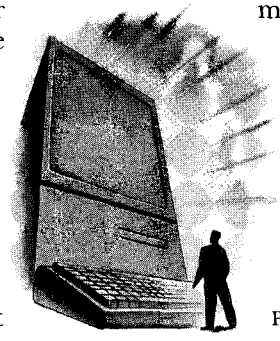
WELCOME: With his article on President Clinton's budget in this issue (see "Tax and Mend," page 19), Robert Shapiro becomes a contributing editor. A former aide to Senator Moynihan and adviser to Michael Dukakis, Shapiro is a founder and vice president of the Progressive Policy Institute, the think tank that helped pave the way for Clinton's policy agenda. Shapiro was also an economic adviser to Clinton throughout the campaign. We're delighted he's now advising us.•

CONSUMED

NO SAVE GET

By Jim Henley

I do my weekly shopping on the train ride to work. While other passengers on the Washington Metrorail read office reports, stock listings or the comics page, I scour *The Washington Post*'s Monday business pullout, passionately matching prices and specs in computer advertisements. The pages are crowded with tiny-type promotions for local personal computer manufacturers, whose prices beat even the mail-order outfits. There, buried in the listings, I find it: my dream machine, a "486-33 4mb-RAM VLB, 250mb HD, 15" SVGA NI, 2ser./1par./1game, 5-1/4" & 3-1/2" FD."



When it comes to P.C.s, most people are content to use whatever is on their desk at work. Their interest typically extends no further than learning which function key to press to restore the file they have just trashed. And most people who decide to buy a computer of their own follow the conventional wisdom: figure out what you want or need to do with your computer. That will tell you what software you need. Then buy whatever computer is powerful enough to run that software. But for some of us, that advice just won't do. We don't buy a computer powerful enough to fit our needs; we expand our needs to fit the power of the computer.

Take me. My present system is adequate for "what I do": write poems and occasional articles to send to magazines like this one, log the responses in a simple database, prepare flyers to promote readings and generate simple sales reports to impress my bosses in my "real job." But I'm not having as much fun doing it as I could be. The central processing unit in my system is a 286 chip, now several generations out of date. I cannot run the latest graphical interfaces and operating systems because of it. The one megabyte of memory in my system would have seemed unimaginable back in high school, when the really souped-up machines had eight kilobytes. Today nobody with any brains buys a machine with less than four megabytes; in three months nobody with any brains will buy a system with less than eight. My monitor is mere VGA rather than Super VGA, and my hard drive, at forty megabytes, is so small that I recently had to dump all my games to make more room. That hurt.

So I need a new computer; and you would think this is the perfect time to find one. Computer companies are currently flooding the market with better and better stuff: bigger hard drives, faster chips, cheaper memory. The software developers are seizing on these new capabilities and creating programs to strain them. (You can now buy a word processing program that comes on a compact disk and lets you access an unabridged dictionary, *The Chicago Manual of Style* and *Compton's Encyclopedia.* But, of course, it won't run on my puny 286.) Computer magazines such as *P.C. Magazine, Computer Shopper* and *P.C. World* are spilling over with ads for the latest, smallest and fastest: desktop systems, laptops, software packages, monitors, expansion cards, memory and drive upgrades, cables, modems, diagnostic kits. (It takes awhile to catch on to the lingo: "HD" stands for hard drive. "NI" is a good sign; it means that the computer monitor is "non-interlaced." "RAM" stands for random access memory. Memory speed is measured in "NS": "nanoseconds.") Like *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan,* computer mags are purchased as much for the ads as the articles.

But the bitter knowledge that comes with the sweetness of ever lower prices for ever greater power is that if you only wait a little while longer, you can always get something much better for the same amount of money, or what you want now for much less. As a result, I've been "going to buy a new computer" for a year now. Last year, when I first decided my current P.C. was obsolete, I figured $1,500 would get me a new machine with sharper graphics; a 386 CPU running at 25 MHz (that chip would process data in 32-bit blocks rather than the 16-bit blocks of my 286); and a 100-meg hard drive that would be two to three times faster than my 40-meg drive. But with the recession and all, my wife and I wanted to pay cash, and I didn't have $1,500 handy right then (I told you I was a poet). So I waited. Now nobody even bothers to make 25 MHz 386-based machines anymore, 100-meg hard drives are petite, and who wants to settle for a 14-inch monitor when, for less than

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Democracy and Democide

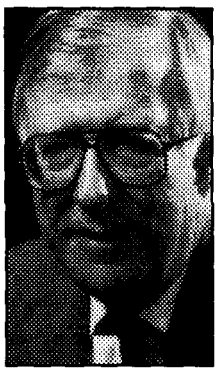
American schools have been unwilling to teach about the superiority of democracy as a form of government. One reason has been a desire to appear open-minded. Since ours is a democratic system, teaching the superiority of democracy seemed like patting ourselves on the back. This attitude led to some extreme relativism in teaching—things like, "Well, we think democracy is superior, but it's our system. The Chinese and the Soviets like their systems just as much as we like ours." In other words, we saw some precursors of the kind of multiculturalism that considers everything equally valid.

Other educators have played down the superiority of democracy because they believed that wars often resulted from pushing ideas about the superiority of one system over another, and they were eager, above all, to avoid the bloodshed that accompanies war.

Much of this has changed. With the dismantling of the Soviet empire and the raising of a Statue of Liberty in Tiananmen Square, it became evident that we were not the only ones who favored the democratic system. Where democracy doesn't exist, it's not because the people prefer their form of government but because they are not free to raise their voices.

Those who still talk about being open-minded should be open-minded enough to compare the war records of democracies and nondemocracies. And those who believe that we can save lives by considering all political systems equally valid need to realize that war has not been the only or indeed the major cause of killing in this century.

"Power Kills; Absolute Power Kills Absolutely," a study by R.J. Rummel, a professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, compares the number of wars fought by democratic and nondemocratic governments since 1816 and the number of people killed in wars. But the starkest contrast between democratic and nondemocratic governments is in the number of people in their control that nondemocratic governments kill.



The starkest contrast between democratic and nondemocratic governments is in the number of people that nondemocratic governments kill.

Democracies are more likely to settle their differences at the conference table than on the battlefield. In fact, Rummel finds no example of a democracy waging war on another democracy between 1816 and 1991. Even now, when democracies include perhaps 40 percent of the world's people, there is no threat of war among them. And when former enemies become stable democracies, they stop making war on each other. Rummel cites France and Germany since 1945 and Western Europe in general. "In 1945," Rummel says, "one would not find an expert so foolhardy as to predict not only forty-five years of peace, but that at the end of that time there would be a European community . . . and zero expectation of violence between any of these formerly hostile states. Yet such has happened. All because they are all democracies."

Continuing the scorecard of wars between 1816 and 1992, Rummel calculates that there were 155 wars between democracies and nondemocracies and 198 between nondemocracies. "The less democratic two states," he says, "the more likely that they will fight each other."

However, what nondemocracies do to their own citizens and others in their control is far more shocking than anything that happens on the battlefield. Since 1900, Rummel estimates that there have been about 37 million battlefield casualties. In the same period, "democide," as he calls this murder of people by national governments, has taken 149 million lives. Between 1917 and 1987, the U.S.S.R. murdered 61,911,000 people; between 1949 and 1987, the Peoples' Republic of China murdered 35,326,000; and between 1934 and 1945, Germany murdered 20,946,000.

Democracies, as Rummel points out, are often unwilling to execute even serial murderers. How can we account for the horror perpetrated by these nondemocracies on innocent people? Power is concentrated in nondemocratic governments so it is not subject to any check or discipline. As a result, the holders of power are free to do what they like. In a democracy, power is spread thinly among many different people and groups and institutions, and they must learn to talk to each other and compromise and cooperate in order to accomplish anything.

Rummel does not claim that power is never abused in democracies. In wartime, especially, power can be concentrated and "freed from many institutional restraints" so that things like the internment of American citizens, who happened to be of Japanese ancestry, can easily happen. Nevertheless, these are aberrations, not part of the basic design.

Those who want to save lives ought to be as concerned about people being murdered by nondemocratic governments as about those being killed in wars—perhaps more concerned since there are so many more of them. We can show this concern by educating our students in an understanding of and commitment to democracy and by encouraging the growth of democracy—not by pretending that every form of government is as valid as every other.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

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$1,000, you can get one with a 17-inch screen? For only $2,500, I could have a 486 machine with a clock speed of 33 MHz, a 17-inch monitor, 170-meg drive and "accelerated video." (Trust me, that's good.)

But wait. Suddenly, VESA Local Bus systems are available for only about $100 more. (Trust me, that's good, too.) And soon, Intel will introduce the Pentium CPU, the next generation of microprocessor after the 486. (Now that will be *really* good.)

And as time goes by, I find more things to want. When I first bought a data modem, fax modems didn't exist. Now, I don't need to send faxes from my home any more than you do, but if I could send faxes, I'm sure I would. My new system won't include a CD-ROM drive right away, though I would like to get one Real Soon Now. But did you know that Sony is developing a new blue-light C.D. laser that will triple the storage capacity of audio and data compact discs? Does it make sense to buy *any* CD-ROM drive before that time? Come to think of it, why buy anything at all, when you can purify the experience into one great ecstasy of delayed technological gratification?

A few months ago a friend and I went to a big computer show. I went thinking that I might buy a new motherboard for my existing system (the motherboard is the guts of a P.C.—it includes the microprocessor and the slots that hold the cards that control the system) but decided it was more cost effective to wait and buy a whole new machine rather than upgrade one part at a time. My friend wanted to buy a new hard drive. The show had table after table of hard drives, but he wasn't satisfied with any of them. He thought he could get a better price someplace else. He wound up buying a brand new system a couple of months later. Which was stupid. Prices have already come way down since then.

JIM HENLEY is a free-lance writer and bookseller.

BUCHAREST POSTCARD

VAMPIRE CITY

By Simon Sebag Montefiore

"Fourteen point seven percent of the world's geniuses were Romanians," says Ion Teodescu, the bemedaled old soldier selling flowers outside King Michael's bullet-marked palace in the heart of Bucharest. I am also told this "fact" by a waiter, a driver, a cabaret performer, indeed people all over Romania, none of whom seemed remotely suspicious of the strange precision of the number.

How the Genius Quota was calculated to one place past the decimal point is one of the mysteries of totalitarianism. The number was apparently propagated to increase national self-esteem under Nicolae Ceausescu, who called himself "the Genius of the Carpathians" but who is now called "the idiot" or "the vampire" by most Romanians. Teodescu calls him "the idiot vampire." It's a common curse. Most leaders here are first hailed as geniuses, then cursed as vampires. The elected President Ion Iliescu (a reinvented Communist of such Machiavellianism that he recently declared himself a monarchist) is still in the genius stage, though the intelligentsia already call him a vampire.

Vlad the Impaler (Dracula) is not called a vampire in Romania. Far from it: the Communists avidly promoted this Prince of Wallachia who vanquished the Ottoman Turks with heroic brutality. Even today he is admired as a sort of Romanian George Washington (with sadistic tendencies). Vampires, the Undead, are a different thing altogether. While Romanians talk about them, they are quick to say they do not actually believe in them. Bram Stoker, known contemptuously here as "The Irishman," was the novelist who combined Prince Vlad of history with the Undead of folklore to create his own saturnine "Dracula." Romanians call this dubious history, but it's good for tourism.

Romania's sinister charm stems from a series of disastrous identity crises. Carved out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire only in the 1860s, this oil-rich, arable land has careened from boom-town kingdom to Nazi ally to Stalinist satellite. In its newest incarnation, a thin patina of Communist modernization conceals a pantomime of cosmopolitan weirdness. Culturally, the Romanians are the last of the Romans, stranded in the Slavic East. Descended from Roman legionnaires who colonized Dacia, they still speak a Latin tongue, worship Italian style and name their children Romulus and Remus. But the Germanic influence confuses things. Consider Transylvania: its oldest towns, Brasov and Sibiu, were built by Saxon colonists, whose descendants still speak medieval German. Or the monarchy: overthrown in 1947, after decades of corrupt floundering by King Carol, there is now a wave of nationalistic longing for a Romanian Restoration, even though the royal family was in fact German. When I ask Teodescu which army he fought in, he answers, "Romanian. German. Russian." Only when we talk further do I realize he is proudly wearing medals from all three: he began World War II in the Romanian army of the Fascist Marshal Antonescu, invaded Russia with Hitler's Wehrmacht and returned in Stalin's legions.

Even Bucharest is not quite sure what it is: Gypsy music plays through the night on Parisian boulevards lined with the Italianate palaces of Romanian

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princes. The suburbs are hideous "Khrushchev" housing estates. The old city is half Turkish bazaar, half Stalinist Disneyland divided by the Avenue of Socialist Victory leading to the marble palace of Ceausescu. Far from a monster of Communist gigantism, as dutifully reported by the world's press at the time of the revolution, this building—a kind of Carpathian Versailles—is far more striking than most twentieth-century buildings in New York or London. The Iliescu government has repeatedly offered it as a gift to the U.N., which sensibly keeps turning it down.

The Sicilian Mafia, beleaguered at home, treats Romania as a safe pleasure dome and is allegedly making vast investments. At night, the grander rogues frequent a restaurant called Velvet, part owned by former Premier Petre Roman's sister. Its slogan: "A Place for Kings!" I am taken to Velvet by a Romanian woman named Natalie, who describes herself as a "professor of the demimonde." She is a dyed-blond, 32-year-old Bessarabian dancer (as well as the wife of a coalminer and the mother of two). "Romania has the most cosmopolitan crime scene in the world!" Natalie likes to boast. There are four mafias, she says, strange relics of Ceausescu's foreign policy. "The Italian Mafia controls the foreign exchange. Syrians control the commodities. The Securitate controls small businesses. The Chinese, prostitution and killing. They're taking over the world." When Natalie is not reading Balzac in Romanian, her job is to dance like Sally Bowles in a garter belt and bowler hat for Syrian mafia bosses at Poiana Brasov, their favorite Translyvanian ski resort in the Carpathian mountains.

The largest mafia, however, is Romanian, with a touch of Gypsy: the former secret police. "The best capitalists were the best Communists," Natalie notes. "These are real vampires, but very clever. We're a clever race. Of the world's geniuses, do you know what percentage are Romanians?" The Securitate mafiosi, in flared slacks, gold medallions, black leather jackets and sneakers, hang out at the nightclub Vox Maris. Recently a police officer stopped Fane Spoitora, a Gypsy gangster connected to the Securitate, at the club. Spoitora drew a machete and hacked off the cop's arm. The intrepid but foolish officer drew with his other hand and shot Spoitora in his arm. Spoitora was arrested, but with powerful friends he was back in the Vox Maris the next day.

After a few days in Bucharest, I ride the midnight train to Transylvania, where there is barely a castle, a church, a ruin or a slab of rock that does not claim some connection to Dracula. Outside Brasov, I am at the cottage of Letcha the shepherd, sipping homemade wine on his porch with the snow-capped Carpathians rising behind us. Letcha, with drooping mustache, Astrakhan hat, thick sheepskin coat and soft boots, has driven me here in his horse and cart to join him and his neighbor Romulus for a drink.

They are determined to convince me that they aren't superstitious bumpkins. Stocky Romulus denies he believes in vampires: "We are modern folk. Ask us about our fertilization techniques," he bellows. "We're not simpletons; 14.7 percent of the world's geniuses . . . "

The considerably more naive Letcha interrupts gravely. "There was a story that Ceausescu was a vampire—"

"But *none* of us believed that superstitious nonsense," interjects Romulus. "These are modern times!"

I ask: "Do you put garlic on your doors?"

The two peasants deny it vehemently.

"Then, what is *that*?" I ask, pointing to a bulb of garlic nailed to Letcha's front door. Silence. "Is it garlic?" The men nod sheepishly. "Why?" I ask.

"To ward off vampires," Letcha blurts out.

"For decoration. We like flowers," Romulus says.

"Well, that too," says Letcha, giving away everything. "But also to ward off vampires!"

"But you don't believe in vampires," I say.

"Of course we don't," Romulus snaps. "But we take precautions just in case. It is only prudent."

SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE is the author of *King's Parade* (Penguin Books).

The littlest consumers.

LEARNING TO AD

By Alex Molnar

"THEY'RE READY TO SPEND AND WE REACH THEM!" brags Lifetime Learning Systems in a classic *Advertising Age* ad. "Kids spend 40 percent of each day in the classroom where traditional advertising can't reach them. Now, YOU CAN ENTER THE CLASSROOM through custom-made learning materials created with your specific marketing objectives in mind. Communicate with young spenders directly and, through them, their teachers and families as well."

Lifetime Learning is only one of many marketing firms that specialize in pitching products to a particularly lucrative group of consumers: students. According to *Business Week*, children 4 to 12 account for $131.7 billion in purchases every year. And more and more corporations are looking to take their share of that figure by pushing "custom-made learning materials" and other thinly veiled promotions in the schools.

According to Consumers Union, a non-profit consumer interest group, students can learn about

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nutrition using worksheets provided by Chef Boyardee, for instance, or about how to keep food fresh with information provided by Reynolds Wrap. General Mills's "Gushers" snack campaign is typical of the sort of educational materials corporations use to pitch their products in the classroom. "Dear Science Educator," the educational packet begins:

> They are earth's great geothermic "gushers": volcanoes, geysers and hot springs. For centuries, humans have been fascinated by these "wonders of the world." Now, your students can share in this fascination. Lifetime Learning Systems, in cooperation with General Mills, Inc., maker of GUSHERS fruit snacks, is pleased to present you with this free educational program, GUSHERS WONDERS OF THE WORLD, along with free samples of GUSHERS for your students to enjoy for use in the junior high school science curriculum. GUSHERS WONDERS OF THE WORLD will heighten your students' interest in geology and the Earth Sciences, and motivate them to investigate this interesting subject area on their own.

The teacher is invited to "distribute the samples of GUSHERS supplied with this program and suggest that students place GUSHERS in their mouths." The snack is filled with liquid that squirts out when it is bitten. The packet suggests that the teacher ask the class: "How does this process differ from that which produces erupting geothermic phenomena?"

Marketing firms invariably claim that they are merely providing a community service, and that the advertising benefits their clients derive from placing their products or messages in the schools are a secondary concern. But one prolific classroom marketer bluntly laid out the aim of in-school advertising campaigns. "More and more companies see education marketing as the most compelling, memorable and cost-effective way to build share of mind and market into the twenty-first century," wrote Mark Evens, senior vice president of Scholastic Inc., in an October 10, 1988, *Advertising Age* essay that outlined the future of in-school advertising. "Gillette is currently sponsoring a multimedia in-school program designed to introduce teenagers to their safety razors—building brand and product loyalties through classroom-centered, peer-powered lifestyle patterning." Evens pointed out that his company's ad campaign was building on a previous effort by Schick, which "had sponsored a similar in-school information program that was equally successful in generating requests for Schick (male) and Personal Touch (female) razors to be distributed to students through home economics educators."

Other companies attempt to "build product and brand loyalties" by sponsoring school contests that offer prizes or cash rewards for schools that encourage people to buy their products in large quantities. In exchange for 5,125 soup labels, for example, a recent Campbell's catalog offered to provide a school with a filmstrip, the "Boyhood of Abraham Lincoln." For 20,000 more labels the school could earn a projector to show it with. Another 6,750 labels bought a screen to show it on. Orville Redenbacher, the popcorn company, has offered ten cents for every label a school collected, and Hershey's five cents for every wrapper. Wal-Mart gave schools a chance to win a computer by encouraging customers to buy featured products. These are just a few examples. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that during the 1991-92 school year, Houston schools alone sanctioned more than 100 different contests sponsored by such companies as Duracell, Eastman Kodak and McDonald's.

Of course, ad campaigns like these aren't anything new. Corporations have been pitching their products in schools for decades. But in an age of shrinking budgets and dwindling resources, the temptation of high-dollar items such as computers and film projectors is difficult to resist. Thus, schools administrators often exert considerable pressure on students and their families to participate in these campaigns. Teachers must take classroom time away from lessons to pitch products, keep program records and nudge students who haven't participated. One school in my area sent out a frantic message during the heat of a local food market's "Apples For Students" campaign, which gives Apple computers in exchange for store receipts: "If each family would shop at Kohl's just one extra time to stock up on non-perishables prior to the deadline, we would be assured of reaching our goal," the note pleaded.

"Free" promotions turn teachers and school administrators into corporate shills—and often make students into salespeople. One corporation, Freedom Industries, gives computers to schools whose students solicit subscriptions to the magazines the company markets, such as *Allure, Bon Appétit, Condé Nast Traveler, Glamour, Newsweek, Self, Time* and *Yachting*. The promotional materials include a "Teacher Training Video" featuring Raymond Berry, former receiver for the Baltimore Colts and coach of the New England Patriots, who delivers an upbeat message about hard work and dedication. There is also an interview with a school principal extolling the virtues of a computer system his school earned and a pitch from the company's president, Tom Crook. But the centerpiece of the packet is this sample letter for students to use on their relatives:

> Dear Grandma
>
> My school needs more computers for our classrooms. You can help us by ordering some new magazines or extending your current subscriptions at this time.
>
> You'll save money with the school prices and your magazine orders provide more "hands on" computer training for me. Order by the prize deadline and I can earn a school crew shirt.
>
> Please help me if you can.
>
> From: Amy
>
> P.S. I love you

ALEX MOLNAR is professor of education at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

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A quota trap for Hispanics.

JUST SAY LATINO

By Linda Chavez

It's been two years since Latin and black youth rampaged through a Washington, D.C., neighborhood, burning and looting local businesses and attacking police. The three-day riot in Mount Pleasant was sparked when a black D.C. policewoman shot a Salvadoran man, who she claimed threatened her with a knife as she attempted to arrest him for drinking in public. Now the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, in a report last month, has determined that the way to prevent such violent outbreaks in the future is for the mostly black D.C. government to establish an affirmative action program for hiring Latinos for city jobs and provide Hispanics with a proportional share of city social services. The commission's recommendations echo the increasingly militant demands of Latino advocates for such entitlements.

They couldn't be more foolish. Although affirmative action sounds like a natural way to tackle the problems many Latinos experience in D.C. and other cities, it's a very rough stick to use on a very complex problem. Crudely ascribing the difficulties of a disparate racial grouping to discrimination and recommending group preferences as an anodyne are likely to drive an even deeper wedge between Hispanic citizens and noncitizens and exacerbate already tense relations between blacks and Hispanics. The major problem Hispanics face throughout the country is not discrimination by city officials, but the fact that so many of them are new immigrants—often illegal aliens—without much education.

The huge increase in the Hispanic population nationwide (53 percent from 1980 to 1990) is largely the result of a massive influx of immigrants from Latin America. Immigrants make up about half the nation's adult Latino population and constitute most of D.C.'s Latino population. Though accurate figures are hard to come by, the Census Bureau estimates that the D.C. metropolitan area is now home to some quarter-million Hispanics; 33,000 live in the District, making up roughly 5 percent of the city's population. Most are immigrants from El Salvador, Guatemala and a handful of other Latin countries. Very few were originally admitted legally to the United States. Many have subsequently acquired permanent status as a result of the amnesty provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, and many more remain illegal aliens.

Given these realities, the Civil Rights Commission's demand that the D.C. government simply hire more Hispanics in order "to eliminate any discriminatory practices" is a little absurd. "Discriminatory practices" are not what is keeping them out. Their illegal status is a far more salient fact than their race. And their poor education is an even more salient fact than their illegality. On average, Latino immigrants to the United States have had seven years of school, making it difficult for them even to qualify for government jobs.

Nevertheless, the Civil Rights Commission insists on seeing the matter in purely racial terms. The target number for Latinos in government jobs is based on a population figure that includes both legal *and* illegal immigrants. In its fixation on quotas, the commission simply ignores the enormous problem of illegal immigration and implicitly urges the D.C. government to do what Zoe Baird was dismissed for trying to do.

Elsewhere, the commission explicitly urges privileges for illegal Latinos. It upbraids the University of the District of Columbia for requiring proof of residency in order to qualify for in-state tuition. But in this the commission is only following the lead of Latino civil rights organizations. Like the Civil Rights Commission, Latino advocacy groups generally look upon the problems Latino immigrants face as obstacles of racial discrimination rather than barriers that result from their illegal status. Consequently, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund and other advocacy groups have increasingly pressed immigrants' claims, winning benefits through judicial and state and local administrative action.

One of MALDEF's first and most important victories in this new arena was a successful Supreme Court case, *Plyler* v. *Doe* (1982), which established the right to free public education for illegal aliens. Since then many jurisdictions have expanded educational benefits for illegal aliens to include eligibility for in-state college tuition as well. New Mexico's board of education has gone one step further, extending alien benefits literally across the border by requiring local school districts to provide free public education to children who reside in neighboring Mexico but take chartered buses into New Mexico border towns to attend school. A variety of federal and state court decisions has also mandated unemployment compensation and disability benefits for illegal aliens, even though it is illegal for an employer to hire them in the first place. For these people, rights are plentiful; but their civic responsibilities to work and contribute to society are actually illegal.

Other welfare benefits for immigrants have become a heavy burden for states like California and Texas, home to one-third of all legally admitted immigrants and an even larger share of illegal aliens. A recent Los Angeles County study found that illegal immigrants accounted for nearly $310 million a year in county spending on social services. Even where jurisdictions deny direct welfare payments to illegal immigrants, their U.S.-born

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children are nonetheless eligible. About 10 percent of California's welfare recipients are such children, whose parents, ineligible themselves, receive the checks on their children's behalf. Perhaps to ensure a political constituency to maintain such benefits, Latino advocates have recently sought and won voting rights for immigrants (regardless of legal status) in local elections in some jurisdictions, including the Washington suburb of Takoma Park, Maryland.

All of this activity has one immediate outcome: it has angered other Latinos and black Americans. Though few black or Hispanic leaders are willing to discuss it publicly, tensions between blacks and Hispanics have risen recently, fueled by competition over affirmative action programs and jobs. In little more than a decade, Hispanics will replace blacks as the largest minority group in the country, in part because of the continued flow of Hispanic immigrants. Already, Hispanics are winning the race for jobs, at least in the private sector. Recent studies by the Urban Poverty and Family Structure Project at the University of Chicago show that many employers already prefer hiring Hispanic immigrants over black Americans. By extending privileges to illegal immigrants under the guise of civil rights, liberals are likely to make this tension even more explosive. Far from preventing another Mount Pleasant, affirmative action might actually provoke one.

Latino citizens are just as angry as blacks, and appear no more likely than blacks or whites to favor special treatment for Hispanic immigrants, however politically correct and despite the claims of advocacy groups that purport to speak for all Latinos. According to the Latino National Political Survey, the most comprehensive opinion study of its kind ever done, U.S. citizens of Hispanic origin—like most other Americans—think there are already too many immigrants in the United States. It found that 75 percent of Mexican-Americans share that view, as do 79 percent of Puerto Ricans and 65 percent of Cuban-Americans, compared to about 74 percent of non-Hispanic whites. What's more, a majority of all Hispanic citizens oppose giving preference to those who want to immigrate from Latin America over immigrants from other areas; and a majority of both Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans believe that employers should hire citizens over non-citizens. This sentiment is nothing new among ethnic groups. The descendants of early waves of German Jews who came to the United States during the 1800s, for example, were wary of the Eastern European Jews who arrived at the beginning of this century, fearful that the newcomers would erode their hard-won status.

Hispanic advocacy groups are betting that all Hispanics will gain if the pool of Latinos eligible to receive benefits is expanded to include immigrants, legal and illegal. But clearly, the Civil Rights Commission should not implicitly encourage employers to break the law. Unfortunately, the commission has surrendered to the entitlements mentality and fails to see that Hispanics—including many new legal immigrants—are succeeding the old-fashioned way, through hard work and individual effort.

As for D.C.'s angry illegal aliens, it may sound harsh, but affirmative action programs can't resolve their legal status. They should make their way by the age-old methods of illegal immigrants—self-help, self-education and eventual assimilation. If they broke the law to arrive here, they cannot expect the law immediately to privilege them over actual citizens of whatever race. This traditional path of assimilation has one other benefit: it is likely to avert, rather than incite, the racial wars that are now bubbling in our inner cities.

LINDA CHAVEZ is a fellow at the Manhattan Institute and author of *Out of the Barrio: Toward a New Politics of Hispanic Assimilation* (Basic Books).

A New Democratic case for Clinton's plan.

TAX AND MEND

By Robert Shapiro

Inside the Chinese boxes that constitute President Clinton's new economic program is confirmation that he has passed his first test of presidential character. Despite protestations to the contrary (including this magazine's), the subtle, New Democrat vision that Clinton's supporters advertised for a decade *does* provide the program's basic architecture. Most of its initiatives incorporate new strategies that either rely more on markets or demand more from beneficiaries. And the program's dose of fiscal discipline is both genuine and structural. That his critics' complaints have so far seemed irrelevant is a measure not only of his

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political skill but also of the program's reality.

The program's first strength is so fundamental it is often overlooked: Clinton *has* taken on the deficit. Voters understand this, which is why they are giving Clinton such support. Bond traders, who wager their fortunes every day on reading these numbers correctly, have been sufficiently satisfied to bid down long-term interest rates to their lowest levels in a generation. They see through the chatter about an early dose of deficit-boosting stimulus. In the second half of 1993, the program *would* raise the deficit—but by only $13 billion, or barely one-fifth of 1 percent of the year's expected GNP. Even some of that increase will melt away as the lower interest rates cut federal interest payments and pare a few billion dollars off this year's deficit. By October, when the next fiscal year begins, the program promises a stronger measure of fiscal drag as the deficit baseline begins its four-year slide.

The early stimulus is not, moreover, a crude Keynesian shot in the arm. It focuses on investment, the centerpiece of the New Democratic strategy (see "A Budget Cure-All" by Robert B. Reich, TNR, March 2, 1992). Measured by dollars, half the stimulus for 1993 would go to a new tax credit for companies that buy new equipment. Small firms would claim a credit equal to 7 percent of what they spend this year and next on new equipment; larger businesses operating on long-term investment schedules would get a 7 percent tax credit for the amount by which they increase their equipment spending this year and next over what they were spending in previous years.

Most of the rest of the 1993 program is more traditional; but much of it would only be temporary. Of the more than $2 billion for summer school Head Start for poor tots, regular summer school for older poor children, food and immunization for poor youth and special education for young Native Americans, most is not explicitly in the budget beyond fiscal year 1993. To be sure, a band of traditional programs wins more funds—veterans hospitals, the Economic Development Authority, Historic Preservation Museum projects, local homeless programs and a few more. But this all comes to little more than $1 billion over two years. And even the $2.5 billion increase for big cities, through the somethimes wasteful Community Development Block Grants, is on a one-time basis.

Much more striking in the stimulus package—and more important—is the first stage of Clinton's long-term investment agenda to upgrade the country's basic economic performance. Most of it in 1993 goes to infrastructure: highways; airport-safety systems and the weather service; mass transit and Amtrak; rural water systems, failing watersheds and sewage treatment; and a broad-band transmission network linking public facilities. This groundwork is supplemented by more lasting commitments to invest in the economy's structural elements: a long-term expansion of support for industry-led projects in generic R&D, new manufacturing processes and energy efficiency and conservation.

The five-year investment plan has more than 100 line items, but the thrust and most of the cash are focused on twenty. With a few exceptions, these major efforts are directed not to particular sectors or income transfers, but to aspects of economic life common to all market activity: infrastructure, education, training of the work force and technology. And to a substantial and striking degree, Clinton proposes to program these new commitments in non-traditional New Democrat ways, often with free market elements.

It may also surprise many people—and disappoint some—to learn that Clinton's new spending ambitions are quite modest. New infrastructure investments come in at less than $31 billion over five years, not $20 billion a year, as originally pledged. New education and training commitments, even at $56 billion over five years, are less than many had assumed during the 1992 campaign. Direct spending increases for research and development come to about $2.5 billion a year. And the largest new strains on the budget come not from new spending at all, but from new tax benefits, mainly for business investment and wage subsidies for the working poor.

The gross spending increases and tax benefits in Clinton's investment program—even before taking account of his proposed spending cuts and revenue increases—total $221 billion over five years, or two-thirds of 1 percent of an expected GDP of more than $33 trillion for the same period. These proportions clearly cast government as a catalyst, not a substitute, for private economic activity. The first part of the investment agenda would increase funding for transportation, environmental and energy systems, a classical strategy for economic development by better connecting businesses and binding markets together. It was Adam Smith, after all, who counseled governments to build roads (and educate children) because markets alone fail to channel enough private resources to common economic needs.

The Clinton infrastructure program begins with modest expectations for the present and optimism about the potential of future technologies. Clinton wants to hike funding for highway repairs and improvements, but only up to the level agreed to by George Bush and Congress in 1991. He would increase grants to expand the capacity of urban mass transit (mainly through bus purchases) and air-traffic control, without providing more federal subsidies to operate local systems. There's also a little more money for state programs to combat drunk driving, and a new substantial commitment to support high-speed rail development. There's only one small false step in the $11.3 billion, five-year transportation proposal: $154 million for airport-runway expansions that could better be funded by airlines and travelers.

Clinton also found $14.3 billion over five years for environmental infrastructure, much of it incorporating market-sensitive strategies. For example, nearly $7 bil-

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lion goes to extend the current wastewater treatment program and create a new drinking-water program (mainly to replace municipal water-distribution pipes made of lead). In both cases, the programs don't provide a new stream of free money, but rely instead on state-revolving funds. Under this approach, states have to ante up 20 percent matching payments, and all the proceeds are *loaned* to communities; in turn, their repayments are used to capitalize new loans. Of the rest of the new environmental money, a healthy share goes to research and development, and only 20 percent of it to more orthodox measures such as tree-planting and "improvement" of national lands.

Clinton also proposes more spending for energy programs: $4.6 billion more over five years. Nearly two-thirds is earmarked for R&D—conservation and renewable fuels, advanced neutron and fusion-energy research—and at least some of that includes cost-sharing by the private sector. Another quarter of the new energy money will go to upgrade the energy efficiency of federal buildings across the country, which could well prove to be a sound investment. Even the one traditional proposal—$375 million more over five years for state programs to help poorer people weatherize their homes—requires state matching payments.

The $5.3 billion in the plan for community development over the next five years also draws on market-based approaches. More than $4 billion of the total is in enterprise zone tax benefits; and while the evidence does not support Jack Kemp's enthusiasm for this strategy, it's clearly a long way from any traditional Great Society model of community development. There's also $470 million for a network of non-profit Community Development Banks, Clinton's own approach for providing loans to businesses and people in blighted areas.

The plan also calls for $23.7 billion in more resources over five years to promote technology and business development, and less than 4 percent of it would go to subsidize a troubled sector (NASA research for civil aviation and short-haul aircraft). Instead, one-third of the total covers the cost of extending the current tax credit for businesses that increase their own spending on R&D; most of the rest is earmarked to support university-based research, private R&D in dual-use defense technologies and a network of centers to help U.S. manufacturers learn about and apply new production technologies.

Private investment and work receive more tax-code support. The small-business tax credit for investing in new equipment is retained after the so-called stimulus program ends. Investors would gain a capital-gains break for capitalizing new businesses, addressing entrepreneurs' chronic shortage of funds. But the largest item by far in this area—nearly $27 billion over five years—is Clinton's proposed expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit, a sound, quintessentially New Democrat program that encourages poor people to work by providing a subsidy for those whose wages still leave them in poverty. And expanding the EITC as Clinton proposes would render moot the most traditional of all liberal economic strategies, a higher minimum wage.

The largest broad area of new spending is in education and training, no surprise given Clinton's view that the skill level of a nation's workers is the most important factor in global competitiveness—or at least the factor government can affect most. Education and training would receive some $55 billion in new funding and tax benefits over the next five years, split roughly evenly between a New Democrat agenda and old-fashioned liberalism. More than $20 billion goes for public school reform (the details of which are still unclear), for a national service program that would trade college tuition support for a student's commitment to perform community service and for new apprenticeship programs to provide non-college-bound high schoolers with skill training.

Other areas not usually considered investments, such as housing and health care, are also slated for more government support; but once again, much of it would not qualify as orthodox liberal spending. Of $9.6 billion slated for housing needs over five years, less than $800 million is earmarked for the programs that build and operate public housing. Instead, nearly 60 percent of the total goes to tax incentives for investors in low-income housing, for operators of multifamily rental units and for states that float mortgage-revenue bonds. Most of the rest is earmarked for housing vouchers, low-income tenant-ownership programs, and anti-crime efforts in public housing.

On the spending-cut and revenue-increase side of the ledger, the program sustains a New Democrat preference for reforms that evoke, and on occasion even rely on, market-based or other non-traditional strategies. If there seems to be a reluctance to drive these strategies until they really hurt one powerful interest or another, this is clearly a way to goad Congress into taking some degree of responsibility.

First, the big picture. Yes, the program contains $2 in net revenue increases for every $1 in net spending decreases, but this imbalance (if that's what it is) is temporary. By 1997 net spending reductions of $65 billion would nearly match net revenue increases of $74 billion, and by 1998 the annual spending savings would surpass the revenue increases. The program contains $493 billion in spending cuts and tax increases over five years; only 24 percent of these gains are given back for new spending and 13 percent for new tax incentives. And when it counts, Clinton aims to succeed where his predecessors failed: under the new program, federal spending would grow more slowly than the economy. Federal outlays, which before Clinton's plan were slated to increase by 19 percent over the next five years, are now credibly set to increase by less than 14 percent.

These gains are, in the main, driven by three basic

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notions. First, defense cuts. Second, saner business principles for domestic government programs. This effort begins with Clinton's requirement that government manage itself on smaller administrative budgets, with 100,000 fewer permanent positions and more modest automatic salary increases. Next, industries using the services of taxpayer-supported federal agencies should begin paying for them. Under the plan, for example, the investment community would fund the operations of the Securities Exchange Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission; pharmaceutical firms would pick up more of the costs of the Federal Drug Administration; state-insured banks would pay for FDIC auditing services; and utilities would pay the Energy Department's costs for enriching their uranium.

The Clinton program broadens the attack on taxpayer subsidies to other areas of the budget, on clear New Democrat lines: for example, it raises the price of timber sales from national forests so they cover the government's costs; hikes FAA registration fees for general-aviation aircraft; reduces postal subsidies for non-profit organizations; raises the fuel fee that helps finance federal inland waterway operations; increases recreation fees at National Parks and National Forests; adds a royalty payment for mining on federal lands; targets crop subsidies to families with non-farming income of less than $100,000; limits deficiency payments to farmers; limits more payments for "overhead" costs to universities receiving research grants; auctions off the public electromagnetic spectrum to television, radio and other users instead of giving it away; charges polluters, where feasible, for the costs of cleaning up their hazardous wastes; and more.

Clinton also goes where no Democratic president has gone before—cutting a host of programs offering little or no value, and asking for a limited form of line-item veto to enforce his judgments. The program would eliminate grants for building wastewater treatment plants in favor of the revolving fund, saving more than $4 billion over four years. Unnecessary nuclear reactor research would end at a four-year savings of $8.2 billion. Special payments to school districts where federal facilities reduce the local tax base would end, if parents working at the facilities live in other school districts. Grants for special projects funded by congressional edicts rather than through competitive bidding or peer review would be cut back.

The third plank in the Clinton spending-cut strategy is health-care reform for Medicare and Medicaid, the fastest-growing items in the budget. These reforms are both serious and structural: the savings from 1993 to 1997 would total $38.4 billion, and in the following year these changes would save another $22 billion. Yet there is also a tentative quality to the proposals, because the broader cost-containment reforms coming soon for the entire health sector presumably will overtake many of the provisions—and produce both greater savings for Medicare and Medicaid and huge new costs to cover the 35 million to 40 million people currently uninsured. On this, we'll have to wait and see.

Compared with the complex structure of proposed spending cuts, the tax side of Clinton's program is straightforward. Wherever high-income people look, the tax collector would bear down. Income tax hikes for the wealthy, corporate tax raises and an attack on tax subsidies that benefit highly paid executives or particular industries are all part of the package. Nothing is absolute in the law or economics of tax provisions, and prudential arguments can be made for and against all of these proposals. Nevertheless, there are two bottom-line questions for any new tax proposal. First, who bears the burden? Clearly, the top 1.2 percent of the population and the top one-tenth of 1 percent of corporations. Second, would the reforms harm the economy? To be sure, lower taxes are always better for the economy than higher taxes; but as the bond markets know, lower deficits are equally better for the economy than higher deficits. As to the specific proposals, recent experience suggests that the higher rates should not have any special negative effect. At least, data show that lower tax rates on wealthy people in the early and mid-1980s had no discernible net effect at all on American rates of investment, productivity, incomes or growth. So it is likely that higher rates in the service of reducing the deficit should also have no untoward macroeconomic impact. (One reason may be that higher rates will drive some of the wealthy to shelter more income, perhaps using a new proposed loophole for donations of art and stock; but that would also cost the program some revenues.)

What about middle-class sacrifice—and the fairness of it? The program would require that retired couples with incomes above $32,000 (and retired singles with incomes above $25,000) pay income tax on 85 percent of their Social Security benefits, instead of the 50 percent they pay under the law today. This would clearly affect people of middle-class income; but when it comes to wealth, these same people are more upper-income. The reason is that retired people with incomes of $25,000 or $30,000 a year often own at least $250,000 in income-producing assets, such as stocks or C.D.s, to generate part of this income.

Finally, Clinton proposes a broad-based energy tax that could raise about $20 billion a year. As he appreciates, judging from his apologies for it, this one provision is problematic from the New Democrat perspective that so long as middle-class incomes are stalled or falling, their taxes should not be heading up. At the same time, the energy tax would, in good New Democrat fashion, promote broader common goals of environmental quality and energy conservation and independence. But it clearly does bring a new tax burden of $10 to $20 monthly for most people. If the entire program succeeds in restoring economic growth to drive up incomes, this burden would be quickly offset.

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On that matter, the New Democrat strategy has yet to be borne out.

Clinton also proposes to offset the tax impact on lower-income people by providing additional food stamps, and on moderate-income people by raising the income ceiling for EITC benefits to $30,000. Unfortunately, if there is any design failure in the program, it lies here, in Clinton's trying too hard to be fair. The higher income-ceiling for the EITC would provide some wage subsidy not just for the working poor, but for 30 percent to 35 percent of all workers, a potential economic distortion of some consequence. And for lower-income people, the combination of more food stamps and higher EITC payments would exceed the Clinton purpose of EITC reform, to ensure that all full-time workers can raise their families above the poverty line. Instead, Clinton could lower the income ceiling for the proposed EITC expansion to $20,000 and, in good New Democrat fashion, use the resources to provide a little tax relief for moderate-income people with young children.

These, however, are quibbles. Many of us who have high hopes for a Clinton administration feel the inevitable temptation to want more action more quickly. Among a neoliberal's fantasies would have been an even greater attempt at wringing inefficiencies out of government's complex bureaucracy: instead of reforming the premiums for Federal Crop Insurance for a four-year savings of $550 million, Clinton could replace the program with direct assistance when bad weather drives crop yields far below average—and save $1.8 billion; rather than raise the fuel fee for companies using federal inland waterways, for a four-year savings of $820 million, he could assess a user fee and raise $1.7 billion. Rather than raising FAA registration fees for a four-year savings of $151 million, he could charge airlines a user fee for air-traffic control services and raise $5.2 billion. Or introduce his proposed reforms of farm-deficiency payments this year instead of in 1995—for triple the proposed $1 billion, four-year savings. Among forty or so proposed subsidy cuts in Clinton's plan, thirteen also appear in the annual deficit-reduction proposals issued by the Congressional Budget Office. If Clinton merely adopted the CBO version in these thirteen cases, the four-year savings would expand from $4.8 billion to $16.9 billion.

A budget, however, is not merely a president's responsibility. It is also Congress's. Let those—especially Democrats—who now quibble with the alleged laxity of the president's plan come up with a more radical reinvention of government and join the president in his own New Democrat game. All of us will wish them well. And our most important consolation will be that the terms of the debate have been radically altered. We're no longer asking if the deficit should be cut, but *how*. There's a broad consensus that government needs to be reformed, the only question is how quickly. Investment as the prevailing principle of economic policy is now the starting point of debate, rather than a questionable premise. For these shifts in the country's direction, a shift long pressed by New Democrats, we have Bill Clinton largely to thank. •

How ancient animosities get invented.

MODERN HATE

By Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and Lloyd I. Rudolph

On Inauguration Day, Bill Clinton told the country and the world a story about how "a generation raised in the shadows of the cold war assumes new responsibilities in a world warmed by the sunshine of freedom but threatened still by ancient hatreds." The new president seemed to have in mind such things as ethnic cleansing and religious fundamentalism, the first a deceptive metaphor invented by extreme nationalist Serbs, the second a ubiquitous term that relieves politicians, news anchors and policy intellectuals from thinking about the complexities of the "other."

One event that fed the country's growing preoccupation with ancient hatreds occurred last December, when "Hindu fundamentalists" tore down a mosque built in the sixteenth century by the first Mughal emperor, Babur, in Ayodhya, a small town in eastern Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. Its destruction was the climax of three tumultuous years during which

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the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party piqued emotions over the mosque. It held that Babur had destroyed a temple on Lord Rama's birthsite in order to build what came to be known as the Babri Masjid (Babur's Mosque); thus, Hindus should reclaim their heritage by building a new temple to Lord Rama on the site of the mosque. More than 2,500 people were killed in the retaliatory violence that followed the destruction of the Babri Masjid. In January violence erupted again in Bombay, where the police openly abetted burning and vandalism. At the end of February, the BJP attempted to hold a mass rally in New Delhi to bring down the Congress party government.

But recent news accounts that depict the violence as an outgrowth of old animosities are misleading. Hindus and Muslims in India under the Mughal emperor Akbar, the nationalistic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress governments of Jawaharlal Nehru have gotten along more often than they have gone for each other's throats. So did Serbs, Croats and Muslims under Tito in Yugoslavia. Clinton and others too easily invoke "ancient hatreds" to explain what are really contemporary conflicts. The question, in other words, is not why old conflicts are flaring up anew, but rather why traditionally harmonious mosaics have been shattered.

Before Christmas, the Hanukkah card section of the University of Chicago bookstore featured a seasonal card depicting two Santas, one with a white beard, one with a brown one, the first carrying the regulation Santa bag, the second carrying a menorah. A scholar of India looks at that card and says, "How Indian!" St. Nicholas integrated into a Jewish festival! Societies with a plurality of religions can and often do work out symbolic settlements. Until recently, the ability to reach such settlements was the dominant theme in Indian history and in its postindependence politics. Friendships are as "ancient" as hatreds. The face we see depends on what human agents cause us to see.

Looking at that Hanukkah card, we were reminded of a friend of ours, an observant Muslim, one of the numerous South Asian diaspora in Chicago. As a child in India, she was once asked to participate in a small community drama about the life of Lord Krishna. Krishna is the blue "Hindu" god adored by shepherdesses, who dance for his pleasure. They exemplify through their human passion the quest of the devout soul for the lord. Not exactly a Muslim monotheist's theme. She was invited to dance as a shepherdess with other schoolgirls. Her father forbade it: Muslims don't dance. In that case, said the drama's director, we will cast you as Krishna. All you have to do is stand there in the usual Krishna pose, a flute at your mouth. Her father consented. She played Krishna.

Line-crossing seemed as natural to that Krishna-playing child as it did to Mahatma Gandhi. In his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, he recalls that his devout mother regularly visited the tomb of a Muslim *pir* and followed Jain ideas about self-suffering and nonviolence. Her un-self-conscious ecumenism was common in Gandhi's birthplace, Kathiawad, a cosmopolitan entrepôt area bordering the Arabian sea. Gandhi began his historic career in South Africa, working for migrant Muslim businessmen from the same region.

With about 110 million Muslim citizens, India is the second-largest Muslim country in the world, after Indonesia. Islam takes many forms, from the most severe monotheism to a Sufi mysticism and devotion that features worship of saints and their relics—practices repugnant to a more austere orthodoxy. Sufi *pirs* and their magnificent tombs attract Hindu as well as Muslim pilgrims from all parts of the subcontinent. None is more renowned than the Dargah at Ajmer, the burial place of Kwaja Nuin-ud-din Chisti, founder in the twelfth century of a family of saints and courtiers, a shrine second only to Mecca in the eyes of South Asian Muslims. Cultural practices mingle and mix. Hindu practices persist among converts to Islam—dietary laws are followed, marriage boundaries observed, festivals celebrated. Aristocratic north Indian culture, its language and manners, its music and cuisine, remained distinctively Persian at least until the time of Nehru, embodying the idioms of Mughal court culture. The region's leading performers of Hindu devotional music, the Dagar brothers, are Muslims. Village Muslims, like their urban brothers, share in local or neighborhood *Ramayana* performances and watch as eagerly as the rest of the nation when Doordarshan, Indian state-run television, airs the eighteen-month-long megaseries on the ("Hindu") *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

But not all practices promote a composite culture and unity in diversity. Hindu and Muslim religious sensibilities have vacillated between tendencies to naturalize and demonize differences. Political language in the nationalist era sometimes used religious symbols to make politics meaningful to common people for whom religion was a natural idiom. Religious language, however, is capable of many different forms of expression.

Some nationalists used Hindu religious symbolism that excluded Muslims. B. G. Tilak, India's most influential popular leader before Mahatma Gandhi, led the way in inventing "communalism," the term Indians use for community exclusivism and chauvinism. In the 1890s, keen to build a mass following, he revived a Maharashtrian festival commemorating the birth of Shiva's elephant-headed son, Ganesh, Hinduism's most beloved deity. For ten days each year villagers poured into cities and towns to celebrate and hear recitations of Hindu epic poetry. Ganapati festivals became occasions for clashes with Muslims when paramilitary "Ganesh guards" directed noisy parades past mosques at prayer time. Muslims began to retaliate by acts of profanation and desacralization, "killing cows" and cutting auspicious peepul trees. Bengali nationalists wrote plays and songs that alienated Muslims by using the theme of opposition to Muslim kings as a surrogate for opposition to British rule.

Secular nationalism took different forms: Nehru

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maintained that science should ask and answer all questions; Gandhi believed that spiritual truth could be found in all religions. At Gandhi's prayer meetings, the Gita, the Koran and the Bible were read. He favored a national language—Hindustani—which could accommodate Urdu, the language of North Indian Muslims, and Hindi, the language of North Indian Hindus.

"Ancient hatreds" are thus made as much as they are inherited. To call them ancient is to pretend they are primordial forces, outside of history and human agency, when often they are merely synthetic antiques. Intellectuals, writers, artists and politicians "make" hatreds. Films and videos, texts and textbooks, certify stories about the past, the collective memories that shape perceptions and attitudes.

Before democracy, modernization and the nation-state, Hinduism was loose, open and diverse, a web of local and regional sectarian groupings defined by a sacred geography of places and events, deities and temples. The very term "Hinduism" was an abstraction, a word used by outsiders to describe a place and a people, not an institutionalized religion. Travelers—Hsuan Tsang, the seventh-century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, and Alberuni, the eleventh-century Arab savant accompanying Mahmud of Ghazni—designated trans-Indus peoples as Hindus.

Instead of Hindus, there were followers of saints (*sants*): Kabir followers and Dadu followers, Vaishnavites in Gujarat and Bengal, Lingayats in Karnataka and Shivites in Tamilnadu, pursuing distinctive doctrines and practices. It is a truism to say Hinduism had no church. There was no pope, no ecclesia, no bishops to enunciate what was orthodox and heterodox, much less heretical or blasphemous. Great debates at Banaras reverberated through the centuries. Great teachers such as Shankara in the eighth century and Ramanuja in the twelfth were revered. But there was no all-India, transhistorical authority. Even today a local religious teacher in Jaipur or Bangalore is likely to be the person of greatest authority for her followers; no one is in a position to discipline her or to question her doctrine or ritual practices.

If there was no standard version of Hinduism until yesterday, then when and how did the day before yesterday end? How did it happen that the Bharatiya Janata Party was able to hijack Hinduism, replacing its diversity, multivocality and generativity with a monotheistic Ram cult? An answer can be found in the history of storytelling. The ancient legend of Ram, the virtuous god-king, incarnation of Vishnu, who wandered in exile for twelve years with his wife Sita before vanquishing the Southern demon Ravana, can be found all over India. It is a moral tale, exemplifying what right conduct should be between a king and his subjects and among generations, genders and relatives. Ram was an intimate deity, his representations infinitely diverse by region and locale. He was the subject of thousands of *Ramayanas* in many languages, of village drama cycles, of stories told by grandmothers, and today of epic comic books.

In time, Ram stories became consolidated. In *The Life of a Text: Performing the Ramcaritmanas of Tulsidas*, Philip Lutgendorf writes that this sixteenth-century *Ramayana* was regarded "not merely as the greatest modern Indian epic, but as something like a living sum of Indian culture." Lutgendorf details how during the nineteenth century the recitations of the *Ramayana* became the vehicle for the "rise of the eternal religion" and how, through the *manas*, Hindus became a "people of the book." In 1984 the vastly popular recitals of the text, boxed in a set of eight audiocassettes, was the "hottest-selling recording in the thriving cassette stalls of Banaras," hotter even than the immensely popular cassettes of Hindi film music.

In January 1987 an eighteen-month-long serial of the *Ramayana* based on the *manas* began airing at 9:30 a.m., prime time, on state-run T.V. *Ramayana* episodes quickly became the most popular program ever shown, attracting an estimated 100 million viewers, roughly the size of the audience for presidential debates in America. On Sundays streets were deserted throughout India. Everyone was watching, even knots of cycle rickshaw drivers crowded in front of T.V. store windows.

The *Ramayana* "megaseries" took advantage of a new space for religious discourse in India, Pakistan, Iran, Oman and elsewhere, a public space outside the private arenas of family and village, temple and mosque. In this space a new public culture is being created and consumed. Distant persons, strangers, create representations of public culture for anonymous viewers. Values and symbols, meaning systems and metaphors, can be standardized for national consumption.

And what did the series do to grandmother's version of the Rama tale? Or to the village performance? In Gatiali, located in the state of Rajasthan, the local village production of *Ramayana* wasn't performed in 1989. Village leaders who watched the television version had been impressed. The local version seemed to them amateurish by comparison. Why take the trouble and expense to put on an unworthy, moth-eaten version? Other Hinduish megaseries followed—such as the great epic *Mahabharata, Chanakya*, a Hindu nationalist reinvention of the Mauryan empire's cunning prime minister. Together they helped stamp out diversity and localism, replacing them with a national, standardized version of Hinduism, what historian and social critic Romila Thapar has characterized as syndicated, semitized Hinduism, a Hinduism of one God, one book, one place, one people, a religion resembling exclusivist versions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Ten months after the *Ramayana* megaseries, the Vishua Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) called on Hindus throughout India to make holy bricks, inscribed with Rama's name, for use at Ayodhya. There, at the site of Rama's birth, and on the place of the Babri Masjid, they would build a temple to Rama. Construction was deferred during the national elections of 1989. The Bharatiya Janata Party, which had captured only two seats with 8 percent of the vote in 1984, now garnered eighty-six seats with 11 percent. Its modest 3 per-

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centage point increase in electoral votes suggests that the party gained eighty-four seats more by virtue of making electoral alliances than by an increase in popular support, but its electoral gains put religion in the political spotlight. After another two years the BJP emerged from the May-June 1991 election as India's second-largest party, its vote share bounding upward from 11 percent to 20 percent and its seats in Parliament increasing from eighty-six to 118. L.K. Advani told India's electorate that if the countries of Western Europe and the United States can call themselves Christian, India should be free to call itself Hindu.

One of the ways to think about the recent savaging of the Babri Masjid by young Hindu men is to see it as a renegotiation of political and economic power and status, or rather as a sign of the pathology of renegotiation. The youths we saw standing on the domes of the doomed mosque were wearing city clothes, shirts and trousers, not the *kurta* and *dhotis* of villagers or the urban poor. They looked like clerks, boys from urban lower-middle-class families. They are the educated unemployed, not the poor and illiterate. Frustrated by the lack of good jobs and opportunities, they are victims of modernization, seeking to victimize others—like "pampered" Muslims. In an India where, despite its problems, the number of persons under the poverty line has been declining and entrepreneurship expanding exponentially, their expectations have run well ahead of available opportunities.

Social mobility in India has become a widespread phenomenon. Liberalization and economic growth have enormously expanded the opportunities for many Indians. The '80s witnessed the highest economic growth rates of the last five decades. Green revolutionaries have grown prosperous on high-yielding varieties of wheat; doctors and engineers educated at government expense find public sector jobs; craftspeople who have parleyed workshops into lucrative enterprises supply large manufacturers. Such mobility is unhinging a severely hierarchical asociety, creating social stress bred of envy and resentment. Old, established Hindu middle classes, mostly from the upper literate and landed castes, suddenly see a whole range of Johnny-come-latelies at their side who only yesterday were their inferiors in status and income, both low-caste folk and Muslims. The hatred that led Nathuram Godse to kill Mahatma Gandhi was bred in the resentment of upper castes on the way down. Gandhi had mobilized the periphery against the center, the lower castes and village poor against Brahmanical orthodoxy. These are conflicts generated by individuals using the opportunities of recent history.

The short-lived Janata party government of 1990, under V. P. Singh, recognized the political implications of the emergence into politics and social power of these new forces, forging an alliance of the "Backward Classes" (a *raj* euphemism for the disadvantaged lower castes) and Muslims. The Backward Classes, many of them agricultural castes who have profited from the green revolution, have been demanding quotas in government jobs and education for decades. Their demands threaten the position of urban upper castes who respond to an appeal to Hindu identity, whose long traditions of literacy have given them the advantage in merit-based competitions, and who disproportionately control such jobs.

How is that relevant to the position of Muslims? They do not have such quotas, either in government jobs or in education. The main "privilege" they have in independent India is immunity for their religiously based family law, which allows "privileges" such as multiple marriages for men and easy divorce. Muslims also have had tacit guarantees, imperfectly enforced, from state and federal governments to be represented in Cabinet and party posts. These may not be substantial privileges, but to the upper castes in the midst of backlash against their slipping position, it is easier to resent minority "privileges" for Muslims than for other minorities. At 11 percent, Muslims are a more vulnerable target than the proportionately more numerous and politically more powerful "Backwards."

North India's Muslim population was decapitated at independence in 1947, when Muslim landowners and educated professionals, many descendants of Mughal court families, went to Pakistan. They left behind silk weavers in Banaras, gem cutters in Jaipur, poor cultivators and unskilled laborers, hewers of wood and drawers of water. But in recent years Muslims have found new opportunities through migratory labor to the Middle East.

A major component of India's foreign exchange has come from remittances of guest workers in the Gulf, Iraq and other Middle East countries. When several hundred thousand fled the Gulf war in early 1991, the precipitous fall in remittances that followed triggered a foreign exchange crisis that drove India into the arms of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. A large proportion of India's guest workers were (and are again) Muslims. For years they sent their earnings home to poor relatives scattered all over India. Their relatives built fancy houses and mosques cheek by jowl with the ostentatious homes and temples of newly rich Hindu neighbors. As Muslim youths joined the sons of green revolution farmers in sporting jeans and sunglasses, as their parents joined Hindu traders in wearing terry-cotton bush suits and driving Rajiv Gandhi's car of choice, the "Gypsy" off-road vehicle, newly rich Muslims elbowed their way ahead rather than lagging respectfully behind.

Prosperity has also bred resentment and anger among those in North India, Kerala and Bombay accustomed to Muslim invisibility and deference. Hindu professionals and businessmen expect Muslims to serve them as tailors and bakers. Industrial and office workers seeking jobs, better pay or promotions expect them to stick to their traditional occupations—weaving, gem cutting, brass tooling. Hindus often respond to Muslim mobility and wealth by challenging Nehru-style secular-

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ism that offers special protection to Islam and Muslims. They decry it as privileging Muslim communalism and stigmatizing Hindu communalism. The Hindu backlash to minority protectionism asks, whose country is this anyway? In Bombay in early January, a month after the destruction of the Babri Masjid, the militantly Hindu, Muslim-hating Shiv Sena acted out the fiery images and language of its campaign videos by torching Muslim homes and shops. The Bombay elite's sense of being in charge and safe in India's most cosmopolitan city was shattered when roving bands searched for Muslim names in elegant apartments along hitherto sacrosanct Marine Drive, Club Road and Malabar Hill.

The prospect that the aspiring poor might receive yet another boost from government action helped precipitate the Ayodhya crisis. In August 1990 Prime Minister Singh's minority government implemented the Mandal Commission report. The report recommended "reservations"—quotas—in federal government employment for Backward Classes. Singh, who had campaigned on the issue, announced that 27 percent of federal jobs were to be reserved for Backward Classes. Together with the current 15 percent for untouchables (those at the bottom of the caste system) and the 7 percent for tribals, roughly their proportions of the population, reservations now totaled 49 percent, a ceiling set by the Supreme Court to maintain the credibility of the equal opportunity clause of the constitution.

Singh's minority government had been held in place by support from a number of left and right parties, including the Hindu-oriented BJP. The BJP leaders, who had not been consulted on the implementation, thought that Singh was ditching their party's support with a view to holding a midterm election that would give him a clear majority. He would appeal to the "minorities"—untouchables, lower castes, Muslims, tribals who together constituted some 60 percent of India's population. The BJP set out to trump Singh's social justice platform, which pitted the disadvantaged against the advantaged, with a Hindu communal unity appeal.

Indian politics began to polarize around *mandir* (temple) versus Mandal. Within a week, anti-Mandal, anti-reservation violence backed by the Congress Party and the BJP began in New Delhi and spread throughout northern India. Upper-caste students, fearful of lost job opportunities, protested the job reservations by blocking traffic, burning buses, forcing shopkeepers to close their businesses and staging immolation rituals that sometimes ended in tragedy. Building on the discontents, BJP president L. K. Advani set out on a 10,000-kilometer chariot pilgrimage to arrive at Ayodhya for the proposed construction of a Ram temple. The country was convulsed as pro- and anti-pilgrimage violence joined anti-reservation violence and refocused attention from Mandal to *mandir*. Advani was arrested on October 23, 1990, and the BJP formally withdrew its support of Singh's government, which fell on November 7. Advani had succeeded in polarizing Indian politics on communal rather than caste-class lines.

The Babri Masjid destruction and the ensuing violence tells us something about the making of "ancient" hatreds: that they are being made in Lebanon, Bosnia, the republics of the former Soviet Union, Iraq, Israel, South-Central Los Angeles and Crown Heights—all those places where neighbors and friends have turned into foreigners and enemies. The enlightenment's vision prophesied human progress, modernization predicted affluence with equality and democracy promised fellow feeling and shared citizenship. Together they foretold a world in which Santa Claus would join the menorah in Hanukkah cards, WASPs eat pizza and Anglos tacos, Muslim performers sing Hindu devotional music and Colin Powell could be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Thinking people are less sanguine about rationality, modernization and democracy reducing ethnic and religious solidarities to harmless dietary differences. Religion has not retreated with increasing media exposure and political participation. The reverse seems to be the case. Religion is on the rise everywhere, from the religious right in Colorado Springs to Islamic fundamentalism in Tehran. It exhibits benign enthusiasm, spiritual exaltation and neo-communitarianism on the one hand, exclusionary and even deadly intolerance on the other. As political ideology recedes with the collapse of communism, the politics of identity and community, of religion, ethnicity and gender have begun to occupy the space vacated by political ideology. Directly and indirectly, religion, ethnicity and gender increasingly define what politics is about, from the standing of Muslim personal law and monuments in India to Muslim and Christian Serbs and Croats sharing sovereignty in Bosnia to the Clinton administration's effort to appoint a government that "looks like America."

Which identities become relevant for politics is not predetermined by some primordial ancientness. They are crafted in benign and malignant ways in print and electronic media, in textbooks and advertising, in India's T.V. megaseries and America's talk shows, in campaign strategies, in all the places and all the ways that self and other, us and them, are represented in an expanding public culture. The struggle in India between Mandal and *mandir*, between quota government and Hindu nationalism, reminds us that in America too the politics of interest is being overtaken by cultural politics, the politics of gender, family values, race and sexual orientation. When T.V. talking heads and oped contributors portray "mobs" as "frenzied" and believers as "fanatic," they have given up the task of discerning the human inducements and political calculations that make politics happen. They have given up making motives visible and showing how they are transformed. "Ancient hatreds" function like the "evil empire." That term too was a projection on a scrim, obscuring the motives and practice that lay behind it. The doctrine of ancient hatreds may become the post-cold war's most robust mystification, a way of having an enemy and knowing evil that deceives as it satisfies. The hatred is modern, and may be closer than we think. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Descents

Two years ago Gianni Amelio made *Open Doors*, based on Leonardo Sciascia's novella, which went dumbly disregarded in this column. Now Amelio presents **Stolen Children** (Samuel Goldwyn), and now his name must be inscribed on a particular honor roll—of those directors who have done extraordinary work with children.

Stolen Children—the Italian title translates more accurately as *The Thief of Children*—centers on an 11-year-old girl and her 9-year-old brother, so perhaps Amelio's achievement was a bit easier than, say, Truffaut's with tots in *Small Change*. Still, the screenplay by Amelio, Sandro Petraglia and Stefano Rulli calls for inflections and silences that are, or ought to be, beyond the comprehension of this pair; and they are so persuasive that we forget we're watching juvenile actors. It's right that we should forget; but later we remember.

The idea of the film was suggested by a newspaper story. The children and their mother are Sicilian, living in Milan. (Sicilians and other southern Italians are sometimes called "the blacks of Milan.") Impoverished, the mother prostitutes her daughter. After a time the police intervene, the mother and a customer are arrested and the children—played by Valentina Scalici and Giuseppe Ieracitano—are ordered to a children's home.

They are to be escorted to that home, a Catholic one near Civitavecchia, by two carabinieri. En route one of the officers cuts loose to visit a girlfriend in Bologna; the other, younger one, played by Enrico Lo Verso, is left in sole charge of the youngsters. We don't brace ourselves for a sentimental journey because the beginning is so ghastly, and we're right. Sentiment could not be the aim of this film. Verity is, including verity about Italy.

The home at Civitavecchia declines to accept the children, partly on the ground that they are Sicilian and will not fit in (a patent excuse to get rid of this unsavory pair). Lo Verso then has to take them to a home in Sicily. En route they stop at his sister's new restaurant in Calabria; then in Sicily he rents a car to expedite the trip.

The three stop at a beach for a swim and also in Noto (the incredible city where an episode of Antonioni's *L'Avventura* took place). There Lo Verso catches a thief who has snatched the camera of a French tourist. But this capture gets Lo Verso in trouble. When he takes the thief to the local carabinieri headquarters, he is reprimanded because he has dallied along the way with his charges. The three proceed in the car. They pull off to the side of the road for a brief snooze but sleep through the night. The film ends the next morning. Lo Verso still sleeps at the wheel; the girl and the boy sit by the side of the highway watching traffic zoom past. (*The International Film Guide* tells us that originally there was an overtly brutal ending.)

No, no sentiment, but during this journey of several days, a bond grows slowly between the taciturn, anorexic boy and Lo Verso; and from time to time the brutalized, suspicious, sullen girl lowers her defenses. Yet the picture is not a journey toward betterment. In fact, the children's realization that whatever has grown between them and Lo Verso must soon end is what underlies their quiet bitterness.

While all the gradations of temperament and response are being calibrated, we move through a series of landscapes that, excepting Noto, are as anti-touristic as possible: neon, poured concrete, tawdriness, new railroad terminals done with the blank coldness that makes us think Mussolini's architecture is not entirely forgotten. Indeed, the film can be seen as a contest between a harsh, new yet shabby Italy and the humane traditions embodied in the young officer. The scene in which he greets his grandmother at his sister's place is the warmest moment in *Stolen Children*. The rest is struggle: his for the children's confidence, theirs to be able to face emptiness.

Falling Down (Warner Bros.) provides an equally gritty view of a different landscape—Los Angeles at its tackiest. The picture opens with a reminder of the opening of Fellini's *8½*, so blatantly done that it can't be called stealing, it's quotation. A traffic jam on a steamy day. A species of nightmare. Out of it emerges Michael Douglas in shirtsleeves and tie, carrying an attaché case. From the start we know something is awry with him because he just simply abandons his car in the middle of the mess and walks away—into one of the grungiest parts of the city.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Groundhog Day. *Fantasy. Bill Murray is enjoyable (that's a fantasy right there) as a T.V. weatherman doomed to repeat Groundhog Day endlessly in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Amusing idea, adequately done. (Reviewed 3/15/93)* **Intervista.** *Federico Fellini's overwhelming, exalting response to a T.V. crew that comes to interview him about his career. (12/7/92)* **The Oak.** *Romania. A harrowing comedy about love and honesty in Ceausescu-time. Maia Morgenstern, the protagonist, is an explosive talent. (2/8/93)* **Riff-Raff.** *London. A rowdy, enjoyable comedy-drama about construction workers and the sweetheart of one of them. Ken Loach does wonders with his mostly non-professional cast. (2/15/93)* **—SK**

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In a car stalled behind Douglas's is Robert Duvall, an L.A. detective on his way to his very last day of work before retirement. Thus we know that Duvall is in for high adventure: that's de rigueur for film policemen on the last day before retirement.

In time his path crosses Douglas's. In time Douglas, who is even flakier than we suspected, runs increasingly amok. He is trying to reach the home of his divorced wife and their daughter in Venice because it's the child's birthday. The film is concerned with his descent into wildness—rage against being mugged, rage against a greedy shopkeeper, rage against a fascistic arms dealer, and with a bazooka from that man's shop, rage against arrogant construction workers—all as he tries to get to his child. He becomes more and more frenzied. When he phones his ex-wife to say he's coming, she calls the police for protection.

As the story progresses, arrangements become a touch neat, some actions and escapes are farfetched, especially as they are contrived to bring Duvall into the story. But as it progresses, the Douglas character comes to resemble the protagonist of an expressionist drama—*From Morn to Midnight*, for instance—who breaks out of his usual patterns of life, vibrates gawkily in various spasms of release and ends with the ending day. Like such a figure, Douglas becomes a villain, or at least a wrongdoer, when for the first time in his life he returns social outrages with outrage of his own. At the end, when he's cornered by Duvall, he asks bewilderedly, "You mean I'm the bad guy?" And we know what he means.

But the mechanics of the screenplay don't help Douglas's credibility, and neither does his thin talent. So we are not as riven as we are meant to be by the social nuisances and horrors that drive him bonkers. Duvall, much much more of an actor, has a routine role. It's so similar to some of his previous roles that he must have had trouble remembering which picture he was in.

Grant a B for effort to the author, Ebbe Roe Smith, an actor who has a small part in the picture, for a screenplay that at least tries to break from the pack. Another B to the director, Joel Schumacher, who handled it all without distinction but with sympathy. And a B-plus to the producers, all four of them, for shepherding this offbeat story to the screen. Finally, however, it doesn't click, not because the ending is prettified—it isn't—but because on the way to the ending, it exaggerates; and because Douglas is too small. •

The Hollow Man

BY JACOB HEILBRUNN

Promise and Power: The Life and Times of Robert McNamara by Deborah Shapley

(Little, Brown, 734 pp., $29.95)

On February 28, 1968, the Pentagon elevator carrying Robert McNamara to the farewell ceremony marking the end of his tenure as the nation's eighth secretary of defense lurched upward and then stopped midway between the third and fourth floors. Thirteen people, including Lyndon Johnson, were trapped in the elevator. While Master Sergeant Clifford Potter struggled with the elevator controls, McNamara fumed and Johnson remained composed. On the lawn outside the Pentagon, Marine, Air Force and Army guards and several thousand Defense Department employees wondered at the delay of a ceremony that was supposed to run like clockwork. Once the elevator doors were finally pried open, McNamara raced down two flights of escalators and through the columns of the Grecian portico to the reviewing stand, only to discover that the driving wind and rain had forced the Air Force to scratch the scheduled fly-by of F-111s. The disruptions of the ceremony seemed uncannily to mirror the sudden breakdown of the man whom Barry Goldwater hailed in 1961 as "one of the best secretaries ever, an IBM machine with legs."

Earlier in the day, Johnson had bestowed the Medal of Freedom on McNamara. McNamara moved his lips at the White House ceremony honoring him, but no sounds emerged. After he finally choked out that "I think that I had better comment on another occa-

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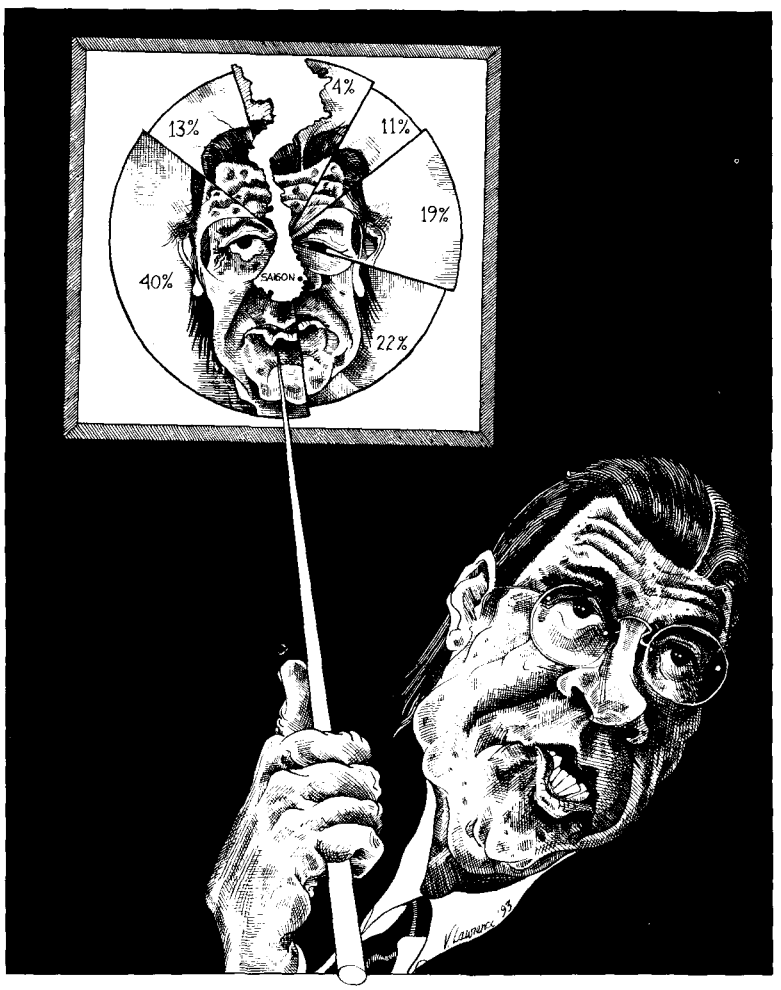
sion," Johnson put his arm around McNamara and gently guided him out of the room. Clark Clifford, McNamara's successor at Defense, later recalled in his memoirs that "for me, it was an eerie echo of what Jim Forrestal had gone through nineteen years earlier."

Before easing McNamara out of the Pentagon, Johnson confided to an aide, "You know, we just can't afford another Forrestal." McNamara has often been likened to his predecessor James Forrestal, the nation's troubled secretary of defense who took his life in 1949. And though McNamara was not suicidal, the parallels abound: the icy exterior, the managerial skills, the attractiveness to women, the battles with the rebellious chieftains of the military services, the crying spells (in McNamara's case, during the Vietnam War). McNamara's life is rich in Forrestalian ambiguities and psychological tensions, and they present no small challenge to the biographer.

Deborah Shapley is well qualified to pick up the gauntlet. An experienced Washington journalist, she has done the archival spadework and conducted many interviews with McNamara's friends and associates, as well as a number with McNamara himself (who reserved the right to review his own quotations). Her account offers the first critical and full-scale portrait of McNamara's turbulent life. By contrast, William Kaufmann, the influential strategist who was McNamara's assistant in the Pentagon, approached his boss on bended knee in *The McNamara Strategy* (1964), and Henry Trewitt was no more detached in *McNamara* (1971). A reliable account of McNamara's life has been overdue.

Finally, however, Shapley's book is not it. There are biographers who guide their readers unobtrusively through the stations of their subject's life. Shapley is not one of them. She assigns herself a starring role in the narrative. We see her forcing McNamara to confront his past. We see her pushing McNamara to tears. And we see her probing for a confession. Of course McNamara never obliges. The most that Shapley can wring out of him is the revelation that "our greatest failure of all was in Vietnam." The interviews have the whiff of therapy sessions, and they reveal more about Shapley's view of the war than McNamara's.

Shapley has assembled the evidence for a judgment on McNamara's career, and she can write with great penetration; but because of her failure to elicit any startling revelations from McNamara during their tussles, she abandons the chase and concludes that McNamara is ... an enigma. The best that she can manage is the portrait of a tortured figure in whom conscience battled with ambition. She sees profundity where there is none. In depicting her subject as a man brought down by his lust for power, she makes the facile assumption that her story is about the tragic fall of a great and brilliant man.



ROBERT MCNAMARA BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Her own materials betray her. They suggest, instead, that McNamara was a mediocre thinker who bungled most of his tasks. McNamara's true importance lay not in his own acuity, but in his skill at convincing his superiors that he had it. That ability was captured by Alexander Haig in his memoirs: "Men who had been listening to testimony all their lives listened to McNamara's briefings with the rapt faces of religious converts. Standing behind McNamara as I placed the charts on the easel, I saw that Lyndon Johnson was one of them."

Worse, McNamara's purported promise gives Shapley a brief with which to lash out at American power in general. By exaggerating his stature, she uses McNamara as a club with which to beat America for failing to fulfill its own ideals. McNamara's failure is supposed to stand for America's failure: he and his country dared too much. Not that she disapproves of all his views or actions; her crude dichotomy between promise and power is a convenient device that permits Shapley to praise McNamara for the actions that comport with her own liberal views and condemn him for the ones that do not. The result is rather cartoonish: the good McNamara supported arms control, the bad McNamara prosecuted the Vietnam War, and so on.

In truth, McNamara is of a piece. He has never been either a liberal or a conservative. The psychic agony that he endured as secretary of defense cannot be separated from his puritanical streak. He is an odd and volatile mixture of manager and moralist, a hollow crusader, the simplicity of whose ideas is matched by the intensity of his commitment to them. Throughout his career, this man approached each new assignment—from resurrecting Ford to prosecuting the Vietnam War to running the World Bank—with the conviction, paradoxical given his own rigidity, that human beings and human institutions are infinitely malleable.

McNamara's peculiar blend of moral purpose and sheer ambition had its origins in his childhood in Oakland, California, where he was born in 1916 into a lower-middle-class family. A Scottish Protestant, McNamara's mother resented the fact that she had lost her social status in marrying an Irish Catholic shoe salesman, who had immigrated to the New World from County

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Cork during the Great Famine. She groomed her son for respectability and emphasized power as a means of doing good. An attentive student, the young McNamara earned top marks in high school and landed a scholarship to Berkeley, where he imbibed Taylorite principles of rational management, which included also the management—no, the construction—of a new self. According to Shapley, he started to "talk and think in numbers; it was a consciously adopted style." Cutting a wide swath on campus, he scored high grades and was elected warden of an eleemosynary organization called the Golden Bears. He used the position to curry favor with the trustees and the president of the university.

But his new connections did not always suffice. Dumbfounded when he failed to win a Rhodes scholarship—ever after he would pride himself on hiring Rhodes scholars—McNamara had to reconcile himself to a place at Harvard Business School. There he steeped himself in Alfred Sloan's statistical principles of corporate management, and his stellar performance as a student won him a post as a junior professor. He acted on, but did not openly espouse, his political convictions; in 1940 he concealed from his reactionary colleagues his vote in a straw poll for FDR. In the classroom, he worked at creating a public personality; one colleague recounts that he saw a chart with two axes on McNamara's desk labeled "joke" and "students' response."

In 1942 McNamara was called up. His statistical skills landed him a position as an instructor in Miami, where he met and worked for assistant secretary of war Robert Lovett and his flamboyant aide Charles "Tex" Thornton. Both men were to have a decisive effect on McNamara's career. Under Thornton's tutelage, McNamara raced around with his Harvard colleagues establishing a system of statistical control that tracked aircraft and inventory as well as deaths and casualties—a precursor of the body counts in Vietnam. His industry prompted his superiors to post him to England, and later to Asia, as a statistical control officer. Relishing his inquisitorial role, he became something of a bully. But his methods worked. His statistical wizardry transformed the air war against Japan by devising a system for the B-29s of the Fourteenth Air Force to transport supplies safely and efficiently. Joseph Alsop, who served in the air force, later wrote that McNamara "was uniquely responsible for making the self-supply system a working reality." McNamara's experience here would show in the statistical character of his air war against North Vietnam.

Back in civilian life, McNamara was tapped by Thornton to join a team of stat control men who would transfer their skills from the military to the business sphere. Henry Ford II hired Thornton and his associates, who were dubbed the "whiz kids," to revive his ailing company. It was the Army all over again. Ford employees literally trembled when McNamara and his colleagues peppered them with questions. The whiz kids soon discovered that Ford was woefully mismanaged; Henry Ford had millions of dollars hoarded in non-interest bearing accounts, and bookkeepers estimated accounts payable by piling up bills and measuring them with a yardstick.

Exhilarated by the awesome task of reviving Ford, McNamara fashioned another version of himself, this time emulating a senior executive named Lewis Crusoe. He became Crusoe's factotum and stalked behind his new boss as he strode through the Rouge plant. Like Crusoe, he began to part his hair severely to the side, clench his jaw, wear wire-rim glasses and carry account books, which, Shapley notes, were "symbols of the fierce rationalism of the new order." But though he wore Crusoe's livery, McNamara was not slow to maneuver on his own behalf. Once Crusoe

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became chief of a new Ford division, McNamara succeeded him as company controller and shifted his loyalties to Crusoe's enemy, executive vice president Ernest R. Breech. Breech envisioned McNamara as his successor, but Crusoe's new protégé, Jack Reith, posed a formidable impediment. McNamara was aided by the failure of the Edsel: contrary to popular belief, it was Crusoe and Reith, not McNamara, who championed the dud. McNamara vigorously opposed the Edsel and used the debacle to destroy Reith's career. And having disposed of Reith, he began to undermine Breech. McNamara would meet and plot secretly with Ford, who enjoyed showing him off; Ford was the first of the bosses who would be impressed at his knack for delivering rapid-fire answers.

By 1960 McNamara had edged out Breech and was appointed president of Ford. His rise might seem typical of the era of the man in the gray flannel suit, but Shapley points to his various heresies as evidence of his conflicted nature. He pushed for seat belts and small cars, voted the Democratic ticket, and lived in Ann Arbor rather than in the company town in Bloomfield Hills. These attitudes, so at variance with most corporate executives, prompt Shapley to argue that a kinder, gentler side was struggling to emerge in McNamara.

Yet there is reason to assume that McNamara was impelled as much by self-righteousness as by liberalism. Shapley shrewdly surmises that he wished to fashion small cars like the Falcon in his own austere image. He certainly wanted American consumers to purchase the cars that he himself favored, and so he aspired to control rather than respond to market forces. His emphasis on top-down management makes him a prime suspect in the collapse of the American auto industry soon afterward. McNamara had no feel for the product he was producing: asked by designer George Walker which of the display models he favored, he loftily responded, "That one, but it doesn't move me like the stained-glass windows at Notre Dame." But his subordinates were too terrified to point out obvious flaws in his plans.

In 1960 McNamara's reputation as a skillful, hard-nosed businessman prompted Lovett to propose him for a second job. This time it was to head the Department of Defense. Kennedy was determined to include Republicans in his Cabinet, and Lovett had turned down the Pentagon. McNamara seemed ideal. Here was a nominal Republican from the ranks of industry who voted Democratic. Kennedy was instantly and favorably impressed by McNamara's apparent toughness; on meeting the president-elect, McNamara played hard to get and handed him a letter listing his demands for independent control at Defense. Kennedy assented. And consistent with his ability to reinvent himself, McNamara immediately severed all ties with Ann Arbor and Ford: "I never went back to Ann Arbor, except to get some shirts."

Small wonder. After a decade spent in the world of automotive panjandrums, the enchantments of Camelot were irresistible. Curiously, Shapley portrays McNamara as a naive bumpkin out of place at the glamorous Kennedy court. Nothing could be further from the truth. He astutely recognized that intimate relations with the orgulous Kennedys could only heighten his influence. Indeed, apart from Robert Kennedy and Douglas Dillon, McNamara was the only member of Kennedy's Cabinet to enter the president's social life. For her part, Jacqueline Kennedy observed about this straight arrow that "men can't understand his sex appeal"; and Robert Kennedy wondered, "Why is it they all call him 'the computer' and yet he's the one all my sisters want to sit next to at dinner?" McNamara's flinty resolve could ignite at least one kind of spark.

He had his admirers at the Pentagon, too. He recruited his own whiz kids from Harvard, MIT and the Rand corporation. (Some of them, such as Morton Halperin at the Pentagon, are back in government now, and the current secretary of defense is himself an MIT defense intellectual who got his start in McNamara's Pentagon.) For, like his acolytes, McNamara was a product of the social sciences, which had flourished frantically in the years after the war. Indeed, he was probably the first American official to bring the assumptions and the methods of social science, its notions of rationality and its techniques of quantification, to power. The McNamara Pentagon was characterized, for that reason, by extraordinary intellectual confidence. It introduced a fundamental revision (more than one, actually) in American nuclear doctrine, and its whiz kids were delighted by the challenge that reorganizing the Pentagon and curbing interservice rivalries posed. Not that McNamara represented any sort of Weberian *Wertfreiheit*. He was attracted, above all, to Kennedy's militancy about doing good. He had a knack for mimicking his superior, and so he fit right in with Kennedy and his crusading spirit, and brought along his bag of new tools.

No man did more to create the military juggernaut demanded by Kennedy than McNamara. From 1961 to 1964 he carried out the biggest peacetime military buildup in the history of the United States. His aim was to create an army capable of simultaneously fighting two-and-a-half wars. (Even Kennedy's admirers must have wondered what half a war was supposed to look like. Vietnam soon supplied the answer.) McNamara's program included adding ten Polaris submarines to the original number planned by the Eisenhower administration, strengthening air defenses against bomber attacks, producing the Skybolt missile and doubling the production capacity for the Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile. In short, $1.5 billion was added to the defense budget for fiscal year 1962. The crash buildup anticipated the wasteful Reagan program. It was ill-conceived and ill-executed; budget decisions were arbitrarily and hastily reached. The man who prided himself on his rationality had as his credo the extraordinary statement: "I would rather have a wrong decision made than no decision at all." He lived by his words.

McNamara's confidence in received nuclear doctrine was first shaken by his exposure to the Strategic Air Command's Single Integrated Operating Plan, the once infamous SIOP. The plan, known in Omaha as the "Sunday Punch," called for firing as many as four missiles at each Soviet target. General Thomas Powers attempted to amuse McNamara by telling him that the air command had targeted a Soviet air defense radar in Albania and adding, "Well, Mr. Secretary, I hope you don't have any friends or relations in Albania because we're just going to have to wipe it out." McNamara was aghast.

These Dr. Strangelove types—Stanley Kubrick's film was not simply the product of a fertile imagination—led McNamara to question the notion of nuclear superiority. McNamara was ripe for William Kaufmann's notion of a limited nuclear war that, in contrast to the John Foster Dulles school of massive retaliation, offered "warfighting" choices to the president. Kaufmann proposed a strategy for keeping a nuclear war limited by sparing cities and attacking military targets. Kaufmann was not advocating that a limited nuclear war should be waged; he was arguing only that, in the event of a Soviet strike against the United States, the United States should restrict its retaliation to military targets, and hold populations hostage for a peace. By means of

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"bargaining pauses" an accommodation might be reached and a full-scale nuclear war averted. In February 1962 McNamara stated, "We may seek to terminate a war on favorable terms by using our forces as a bargaining weapon—by threatening further attack." In a famous June 1962 speech in, of all places, Ann Arbor, McNamara announced the new strategic doctrine of "no-cities counterforce."

The Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, in which Kennedy and Khrushchev traded notes and bargained over nuclear forces, vindicated for McNamara the wisdom of a theory of nuclear war grounded in the precepts of the carefully calibrated escalation that lay at the heart of the doctrine of limited war. Yet the fact that Kennedy did threaten a first strike during the crisis prompted McNamara to seek more secure measures. The notion that a gradual escalation took place in October was (and remains) a misreading of the crisis. We now know that the crisis was largely the product of Kennedy's obsession with Castro, coupled with his penchant for covert action, which convinced Khrushchev that the United States was on the verge of launching a second Bay of Pigs.

Khrushchev's apprehensions may not have been implausible. Where Dulles spoke of rollback, Kennedy tried to practice it. The portrait of a cool and collected president during the crisis drawn by Kennedy hagiographers can no longer be reconciled with the historical record. Nor can Kaufmann's portrayal of the outcome of the crisis as a victory for the "controlled and deliberate application of force." On the contrary, Michael Beschloss has convincingly shown in *The Crisis Years* the fecklessness of Kennedy during the episode; and it now seems clear that it was Khrushchev's fear of American nuclear superiority that ultimately prompted the Soviets to back down and avoid a catastrophic nuclear exchange.

Of course, Khrushchev precipitated the crisis with his irrational belief that the United States would countenance the emplacement of tactical and ballistic nuclear missiles in Cuba. But McNamara was unwilling to concede that the Soviet Union might act irrationally, or even in ways that might strike him as irrational. In 1964 McNamara somersaulted from graduated escalation to mutually assured destruction (MAD), from targeting military installations to cities. Certainly his rejection of gradual escalation was sensible; the idea that it could be really controlled was a dangerous conceit. But his conception of MAD was flawed; it relied almost entirely on arms control and Soviet self-restraint to maintain the delicate balance of terror.

MAD amounted to a revolution in nuclear strategy. McNamara, who had extravagantly beefed up and refined American defenses, as the doctrine of counterforce demanded, now began extravagantly to reduce American defenses, as arms control required. Had McNamara comprehended the totalitarian nature of the Soviet Union, he might have pursued arms control more cautiously and realized that the Soviet Union drew the opposite lesson from the missile crisis, namely, that it had to launch its own crash nuclear buildup. But his faith in "rationality" was too far-flung: the Soviet Union set priorities that were not necessarily rational. McNamara remained oblivious to the character, culture and history of the Soviet Union (as well as Vietnam). He would have done well to ponder Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily Kuznetsov's famous warning in December 1962 that the Kremlin "will honor" the Cuban agreement, "but I want to tell you something. The Soviet Union is not going to find itself in a position like this ever again."

This time McNamara brooked no

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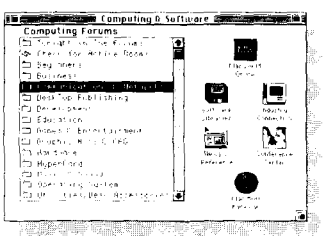

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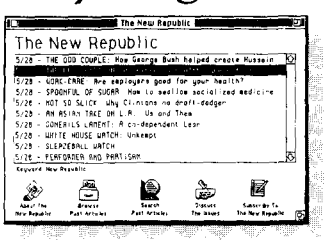

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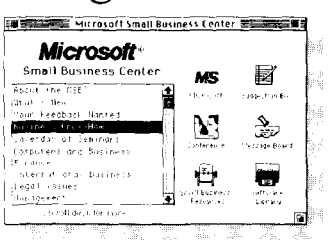

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doubts about the efficacy of arms control. As his speechwriter Jack Maddux put it, "Scratch McNamara and you have a teacher, a missionary." He naively believed that MAD could be brought into existence by establishing a "cooperative" regime with the Kremlin on nuclear matters. In April 1965 he contended that the Soviets had "decided" that they had "lost the quantitative race and they are not seeking to engage in that contest." By September 1967 he claimed that "what is essential to understand here is that the Soviet Union and the United States mutually influence one another's plans.... It is precisely this action-reaction phenomenon that fuels an arms race."

McNamara thereby invented some of the misapprehensions that informed the arms control movement and crippled the Democratic Party on foreign policy issues throughout the 1970s and 1980s. (In 1986, in *Blundering into Disaster*, McNamara proclaimed that "we must rid ourselves of the idea that the Soviet economy may 'collapse' and of the equally far-fetched notion that the West has either the power or the duty to contribute in a significant way to the collapse or the reform of that enormous machine.") McNamara's scheme depended on leaders capable of comprehending the subtleties of the balance of terror; but the evidence emerging from the Russian archives only confirms the primitive nature of the Soviet leadership. Leaders who had distinguished themselves by rising in the Darwinian environment of the Soviet nomenklatura were not likely to recoil from raw power politics at the international level, or to behave like the rational utilitarians of the game theory on which many of McNamara's strategists had broken their teeth. While Washington curbed its expenditures on nuclear forces, first Khrushchev and then Brezhnev poured vast sums into what Moscow called its "strategic rocket forces" in pursuit of an illusory (but not to them) nuclear superiority. Coupled with Third World adventurism, the two men's armament program successfully transformed the Soviet Union from a European regional power into a global superpower. McNamara and the arms control community remained oblivious to the fact that the arms race was the product, and not the source, of superpower tensions—and that the source of those tensions was the Kremlin's imperial ambition.

McNamara's prosecution of the Vietnam War had even more lasting consequences. Shapley extols his role as one of the founding fathers of the arms control movement and excoriates him for his conduct of the Vietnam War. Yet it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that McNamara's approach to the war and to arms control were exactly the same. Once again the notion of graduated escalation, of "bargaining pauses," of a rational enemy who would respond predictably and sensibly determined McNamara's actions. These were the models with which he rewrote nuclear doctrine, and they had far more disastrous consequences when applied in the jungles of Vietnam.

Indeed, Kennedy's and McNamara's fascination with covert action can be seen both as a source and a consequence of their enthusiasm for graduated escalation and flexible response, as a splendid illustration of what Hans Morgenthau devastatingly called "the conventional fallacy," that is, the misplaced analogy of nuclear war with conventional war. (Morgenthau worried that conventional strategy would influence nuclear strategy, but the influence also ran, no less balefully, the other way.) Covert activity as a means of carrying out flexible response had its doctrinal origins in George Kennan's call in 1947 for the creation of a "guerrilla warfare corps" that would fight behind the Iron Curtain and his warning in the final days of the Truman administration that Moscow could not be contained solely by military alliances. The Eisenhower policy of massive retaliation left little room for the Army to confront Moscow in local "wars of liberation." For different reasons, prominent Democrats and Generals Matthew Ridgway and Maxwell Taylor picked up on Kennan's theme. By 1958 Senator Kennedy declared that the true threats to American security were "limited brushfire wars, indirect non-overt aggression, intimidation and subversion, internal revolution." As president, Kennedy was mesmerized by the prospect of American soldiers stealthily battling Communists in Asian jungles. And so McNamara proposed an increase of 13,000 men for the three services, with 3,000 earmarked for the special services.

The proclivity for covert action was the perfect expression of a moralistic self-confidence; it also had its sources in the Kennedy administration's insistence on appearing tough and decisive. Kennedy saw Laos as a proving ground for the Green Berets. So did McNamara. As Shapley perceptively observes, "By his high profile, his statistics, flying trips, press conferences and optimism, he identified himself with the war. McNamara gave John Kennedy's limited partnership in this remote part of the world its aura of invincible, thoroughly American success."

Certainly McNamara's public enthusiasm for the war knew no bounds. At congressional hearings in 1963 he shilled for Diem, who had moved "that country out of near feudalism into the modern age" in a manner that amounted to a "near miracle." And with Kennedy's assassination and Johnson's assumption of the presidency, McNamara's views only hardened. From his defense secretary Johnson didn't "want loyalty. I want *loyalty*. I want him to kiss my ass in Macy's window at high noon and tell me it smells like roses. I want his pecker in my pocket." He found what he wanted in McNamara. In one of her most insightful passages, Shapley comments that McNamara "choreographed his own public transfer of loyalty to Lyndon Johnson" on national television. On the evening of the assassination, he elbowed his way through the throng awaiting Johnson's return to Washington aboard Air Force One and seized his hand, conveying the image of the dutiful and custodial servant.

Under Johnson, McNamara moved ahead with covert operations against North Vietnam by using something called Operation Plan 34A. By early 1964 he was convinced that he was single-handedly stopping communism in Asia and saving the developed world. Responding to Senator Wayne Morse's charge that Vietnam was "McNamara's war," he stated, "I don't mind it's being called McNamara's war. In fact I'm proud to be associated with it." He was so proud to be associated with it that he almost certainly misled Congress during the hearings on the Gulf of Tonkin and again in investigative hearings conducted several years later by Senator William Fulbright. McNamara was ready to deceive on behalf of the president, and he could not bear to admit that he had been wrong.

Nor could he face up to his inner doubts that the war was not only a crime, but also a blunder. When McNamara met with Johnson and his advisers in January 1965 and expanded the American commitment to South Vietnam, he squelched George Ball's dissenting paper urging an American withdrawal. Instead he urged calibrated air strikes that would prop up the tottering Saigon regime. "Rolling Thunder" was the air campaign that was designed to wring concessions from the North. The plan resembled McNamara's strategy for fighting a nuclear war in that it mentioned "sustained reprisal" and banked on an enemy who would react rationally to limited sorties and to the threat of greater attacks. Which is to say, it assumed that the enemy would take the kind of action that one wished the enemy to take.

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At the same time, McNamara endorsed General William Westmoreland's request to send American troops into combat and, as was his habit, silenced any dissent, even the timorous objections to the "Americanization" of the war voiced by Maxwell Taylor, who was by then the ambassador in Saigon. For all his show of confidence, McNamara found the slightest objections intolerable. To counter Ball's continued dissents, McNamara offered at a crucial meeting on July 22 what Clark Clifford, who functioned as an informal adviser to Johnson, adjudged "the most extreme version of the domino theory I had ever heard." McNamara thundered that

> Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma surely affect Malaysia. In two to three years Communist domination would stop there, but ripple effects would be great—Japan, India. We would have to give up some bases. Ayub [Khan, the leader of Pakistan] would move closer to China. Greece, Turkey would move to neutralist position. Communist agitation would increase in Africa.

By December 1965 McNamara realized that he had miscalculated back in July when he promised Johnson a limited war. Whatever his qualms, however, he continued to champion the war publicly. He persisted in his belief that Hanoi would respond predictably to shifts in the pain from bombing attacks. He also promoted a project run by something called the Jason Division of the Institute for Defense Analyses that would create a technological barrier following the 37th Parallel that would sense the approach of the enemy—soon to be ridiculed as the McNamara Line.

McNamara's impulse to reshape the war by means of technology did not exhaust his passion for crusading on the home front. Ironically, he was careful to depreciate the importance of technology. In Montreal he announced in 1966 that he was not a "tool" or an "IBM card." In a thinly veiled autobiographical passage, he lauded man's "halting but persistent effort to raise his reason above his animality. He draws blueprints for Utopia. But never quite gets it built.... He plugs away obstinately with the only building material really ever at hand: his own part-comic, part-tragic, part-cussed but part-glorious nature." To his delight, and to Johnson's fury, the press showered McNamara with encomiums. Mary McGrory gushed that "the real Robert McNamara" had "stood up" at Montreal; James Reston that "McNamara is reaching beyond the draft.... He is searching for a unifying principle."

There is no reason to impugn McNamara's sincerity. As his address to the hostile Veterans of Foreign Wars in August 1966 demonstrated, he was determined to uplift the "subterranean poor" by inducting 100,000 men into the military who would normally be summarily rejected. Called Project 100,000, McNamara's experiment in social engineering had the most awful results: the bulk of the mainly black recruits were assigned to combat duty in the Army, where they were ridiculed by training camp commanders as "McNamara's morons" and ended up serving as cannon fodder in Vietnam. Shapley reports that Herb de Bose, a former Army lieutenant, lamented that these soldiers had "no skills before, no skills after.... I think McNamara should be shot."

Martin Luther King Jr. denounced McNamara for luring poor blacks into the service with the promise of better jobs, and the project added fuel to protests against the war. Unable to reconcile the public perception of himself with his own dreams of remaking the world, McNamara began to crack. In public, his voice would break and his face contort in pain. At Harvard, when 800 demonstrators surrounded him as he entered a campus police car, McNamara clambered to the top of the car and shook his fist at the protesters. "Lis-

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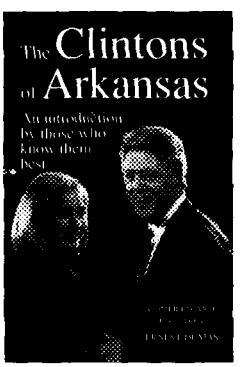

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ten! I spent four of the happiest years of my life on the Berkeley campus, doing some of the things you're doing here," he shouted. "But there was an important difference. I was tougher and more courteous. I was tougher than you and I am tougher today!"

For all his celebrated sobriety and cool rationality, he was proving as brittle as the military juggernaut he had fashioned. Back at the Pentagon, he would pace back and forth in his office, stare at the portrait of Forrestal hanging behind his nine-foot-long Pershing desk and shudder violently. His bouts of weeping did not go unnoticed: "He does it all the time now. He cries into the curtain," said his secretary. It was time for him to go. He broke with Johnson over the continued prosecution of the war (though he still championed it publicly). But he was paralyzed, like Forrestal, by indecision and could not bear the thought of parting with command. An exasperated Johnson had to kick McNamara upstairs to the World Bank by announcing the appointment without McNamara's prior agreement, and replacing him at Defense with his old crony Clifford.

In Shapley's view, McNamara "was upholding, in effect, the promise of the American century" in his conduct of the war, and "the needs [sic] to have power and display the promise of a better dawn had become a deep schism." This notion, that McNamara personified that sloppy and hackneyed thing known as "the American century," transforms him into a titan, an American Atlas shouldering a national dream. The truth is much harsher. McNamara was neither one of the best nor one of the brightest. If there was a schism, it was between his perception of himself as a bold and rational manager and his willingness to adopt irrational and delusive tactics to reach his goals. Fighting the war or dabbling in social engineering, McNamara was forever mistaking ambitions for causes, and confounding managerialism with idealism.

These traits manifested themselves once more during McNamara's tenure as president of the World Bank. Again, he attempted to operate on a grand scale before defining his purposes. He launched his own private war on poverty, using the "nation-building" and "modernization" theories he applied in Vietnam, only on a greater scale. This should put to rest the sentimental view that McNamara was performing an act of expiation. Quite the contrary. His failure to reconsider the flawed ideas and methods that led to disaster in Vietnam bespeaks a hollowness so great that it casts doubt on his capacity for a real reckoning.

He claimed that the West had the obligation to make unconditional transfers of wealth to the developing countries. He disdained the cautious approach that the bank had hitherto adopted toward loans to the Third World and insisted that the bank offer loans to each developing country. Not coincidentally, the more the bank lent funds, the faster McNamara accumulated power. Third World debts quickly mounted, but McNamara was unrelenting. By 1978, one year before McNamara stepped down, the bank, which had doubled its lending, was handing out enormous subventions to kleptocracies of the worst stripe. His toleration of the misuse of bank funds helped perpetuate regimes such as Bokassa's Central African Empire, and in Brazil he even ended up subsidizing the destruction of the rain forest. With his old missionary fervor, he claimed that a 5 percent growth rate could be achieved within a decade. His mania for quantification remained; one wag at the bank commented that "we did a lot of body counting in those days."

At the bank itself, McNamara continued to operate by means of fear, and to hold himself aloof from his employees. As he had at the Pentagon, he spurned the advice of regional experts and relied on a coterie of hand-picked advisers. For all his vaunted skills with numbers, he insisted that his associates provide him with a range of figures, even if firm statistics were unavailable, and arbitrarily select one as a basis for policy. So obsessed was he with numbers that at a lunch with his old colleague Timothy Stanley, he first scribbled some numbers about population growth on a yellow pad and then, needing more writing room, stood up and continued to rattle on, while wildly filling the pink tablecloth with figures.

The most that Shapley will venture after 606 pages of mistakes and blunders and miscalculations in high places is the verdict that "purely negative judgments are too easy.... He is a pivotal figure in the weakening and decline of America, despite the many virtues of the American century he embodies." This is equivocation. McNamara's failure was not a Sisyphean attempt to redeem America. It was a purely personal failure. The confidence that institutions and men were as tractable as himself proved his undoing. This man who believed that management is "the most creative of all the arts, for its medium is human talent itself" viewed himself as an engineer of human souls, but his most flawed creation was his own soul, himself.

JACOB HEILBRUNN is University Fellow at the Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University.

The Haunted House

BY SVEN BIRKERTS

The Fourteen Sisters of Emilio Montez O'Brien by Oscar Hijuelos

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 484 pp., $22)

In academe, multiculturalism and the thorny issues that it poses are the subject of the hour. Who will set the curriculum, who will be included, what will be the political fallout? Read enough journals of opinion and you will begin to believe that the fate of our culture is being decided on the playing fields of the syllabus. In fact, the marketplace may already be way ahead. The larger reading public (students included) appears blissfully unconcerned with canonic strictures, and eager to hear "other" voices, international (Milan Kundera, Naguib Mahfouz, Marguerite Duras) or domestic (Amy Tan, Toni Morrison, John Edgar Wideman, Julia Alvarez). One could argue, indeed, that it is the infusion from outside the mainstream that is keeping our literature vital, bringing in new sounds and new rhythms, fresh imagery and different approaches to subject matter.

Few recent novels have generated as much extra-academic excitement as Cuban-American Oscar Hijuelos's *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* (1989). Slipping in and out of the booze-drenched memories of a dying Cuban mambo star, the novel wove together extended passages of lyrical retrospection with bursts of aggressive eroticism. Cesar Castillo's life was seen to have

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been as much about sexual conquest as it was about unappeased longings for love or remorse over the death of his brother Nestor in a car accident. Hijuelos brought his setting—the nightclub world of Batista's Havana and the New York Latino music scene in the 1950s and 1960s—sharply to life. He even devised an extended cameo role for Desi Arnaz. But the true glory of the book was its prose, which was energetic, detailed, able to modulate from the silky to the percussive in the space of a line:

> Cesar stood before the microphone, saintly under those lights, with vocal chords trembling, his wrecked-by-cigarettes voice crooning, arms spreading wide to embrace the world. The good people of the good Pennsylvania earth had no idea what to make of their music. Cesar was always a joy to watch during the fast dance numbers, the man sliding and bending, flailing his arms into odd configurations—at one moment lilting forward and stomping his heels, at the next jumping bolt upright like an exclamation point—his face contorting, his mouth in an "O," in a Vanna Vane "Ooooo"; his teeth set like a trap, tongue lashing the air; his braceleted and beringed hands jangling; his shoes pirouetting; and he'd shout "Uhhhhhh!" while conducting the orchestra and clap and shout out the names of his musicians, "*Vaya*, Pito! *Vaya*, Nestor!" and "Uhhhhh" again.

Readers and critics and judges alike responded to what they heard on the page, to the sheer force of the voice. And though *Mambo Kings* was by no means a perfectly executed work—it was overweight by at least 100 pages—Hijuelos was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Of course, no sooner does a writer succeed in this way than the formerly unheeding world takes on the aspect of a pushy interviewer with a jabbing mike: "And what's next for the author of *Mambo Kings*?" *The Fourteen Sisters of Emilio Montez O'Brien* is Hijuelos's unexpected answer.

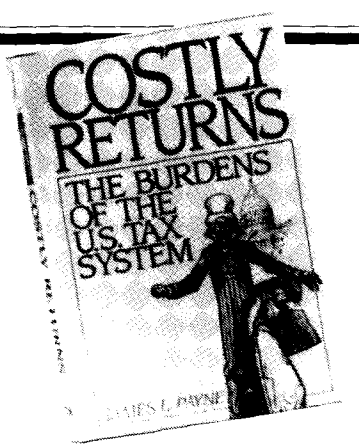
It could not be more unlike its predecessor. The only shared feature is an occasionally piercing mood of retrospect. Otherwise, it's as if the work had been extracted from a wholly different sensibility. Where *Mambo Kings* was essentially filtered through one man's memory, *The Fourteen Sisters* is decentered, parceling out its many strands of narrative among one or another member of the eponymously vast Montez O'Brien clan. To the smoky urban atmosphere of the former, Hijuelos opposes the bucolic placidity of life in a small Pennsylvania town. And where the pulse of mambo somehow dictates the headlong pace of the earlier novel, the static arrangements of still photography (Nelson O'Brien, the paterfamilias, is a photographer) determine the disposition of scenes in *The Fourteen Sisters*, which finally takes on the aspect of a bulky family album.

The novel opens beguilingly:

> The house in which the fourteen sisters of Emilio Montez O'Brien lived radiated femininity. Men who passed by the white picket fence—the postman, the rag seller, the iceman—were sometimes startled by a strong scent of flowers, as if perfume had been poured onto the floorboards and ground. And when the door to the house—a rickety, many-roomed Victorian affair some few miles outside the small Pennsylvania town of Cobbleston, with tectering beams and rain-soaked clapboard facade (with gables, rusted hinges, and a fetid outhouse on a foundation that tended to creak during heavy rains, a roof that leaked, and with splintering surfaces everywhere)—when their door opened on the world, the power of these females, even the smallest infants, nearly molecular in its adamancy, slipped out and had its transforming effect upon men. Over the years, a thick maple tree, standing out in the yard, had been the scene of numerous accidents: men were thrown from their horses or, begoggled and blinded by what they may have taken as the sun, skidded their Model 1s, their Packards, their sporty sedans off the road into a ditch, axles bent and crankcases hissing steam.

Beguilingly; but also familiarly. If the title were not a sufficient tip-off, then its opening salvo ought to be: Hijuelos is tapping freely into the manner of Gabriel García Márquez, not so much the "magic realism" of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, though there are occasional echoes, but its more earthbound cousin, most effectively deployed in *Love in the Time of Cholera*. The trademark features of that style include rolling and inclusive periodic rhythms and itemized descriptive detailings. Even more telling, there is a hyperbolic pressure against naturalistic expectations ("men were thrown from their horses") and a narrative framework ("Over the years") that situates the action in the indeterminate sphere of legend and imparts to the whole a sense of "Once upon a time . . . "

Hijuelos makes no move to conceal his debt, and this gives his appropriation the character of homage. Homage is certainly due; it was García Márquez, after all, who found a way to reinvest contemporary prose narrative with ancient storytelling energies. But Hijuelos's open admission of influence does not end the matter. The fact remains that an author's style is a signature, an organic feature of his or her unique vision; one does not put on a style like a Mardi Gras mask. The failure of *The Fourteen Sisters*



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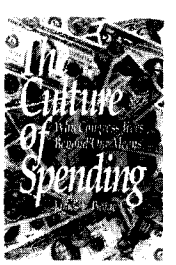

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has more than a little to do with Hijuelos's decision to impersonate his master.

Formally speaking, Hijuelos has a strong incentive for taking up the García Márquez mode. He has a good deal of episodic narrative, but he has very little in the way of plot. *The Fourteen Sisters* is not finally powered by events or characters in dynamic interaction. It depends, rather, on a passive accumulation of impressions, which only gradually achieves the sense of an evolving family history. In the absence of a plot-driven center, then, the Marquesian style gives Hijuelos just what he needs—a way to lend his scenes the burnish of legend.

The Fourteen Sisters (a misleading title insofar as the book is as much about the lives of the parents as of their children) plunks its reader right into the vortex of family life. Though Hijuelos will move about freely in the great room of time, establishing vantages as he sees fit, he locates us first "around 1921, when Margarita Montez O'Brien, the eldest of the sisters, was 19," when "an aviator brought down his biplane, a Sopwith Camel, in a hayfield west of the house, a dizziness having come over him just as his plane was passing overhead, a half-mile above, as if caught in a sirenic beam of influence that flowed upward from the parlor, where the sisters happened to have gathered in chaotic preparation for a midday meal." And though the aviator recuperates in the family parlor, and though Margarita is quickened by his exotic and manly presence, he is destined to become nothing more than an emblematic memory for the girl.

With this opening episode Hijuelos has not only established something of the atmosphere of the Montez O'Brien home, its feminine densities, he has also nudged Margarita forward as a protagonist. She will hold that role for some time, not because her story or her character warrants special focus, but because the author needs to establish a narrative axis. Having, for whatever reason, decided on a family of fourteen sisters and one brother, Hijuelos must continually exert himself against the confusions that beset a crowded stage. Thus we learn a good deal more than we may want to know about Margarita's adolescence, the first stirrings of her sexuality and her marriage to one Lester Thompson, the attractive suitor who by degrees will disclose his darker side. At the same time, Hijuelos is working hard on his backdrop, introducing the other sisters and giving them mnemonic attributes, and sketching in pertinent information about the parents.

Then, in the second of the novel's five sections, Hijuelos steps back in time to tell of the courtship and marriage of Nelson O'Brien and Mariela Montez. Nelson, recently immigrated to America from Ireland, and finds himself adrift when his beloved older sister dies. He volunteers to fight the Spanish in Cuba, but ends up seeing action only as a documentary photographer. When the war ends, he stays on in Santiago, where he opens a photo studio and falls in love with the daughter of one of his clients. He marries Mariela in 1901, and though we do not find out much about their subtler emotional interactions, we see their early days of happiness preserved as if on daguerreotype:

> During their honeymoon—their *luna de miel*—spent in a simple house by the sea, they made love thirty-two times in one week. The days were beautiful and grand, eternal in memory. By day they would go bathing, he in a striped outfit that reached to his knees, romping about in the surf like a nineteenth-century muscleman; she with a parasol, examining the marine fossils, in a bathing dress that hung down to her ankles, the uplifted hem of her skirt splashed and damp from the water. Ever timid, he would come in from the porch and find her naked body serrated by the shuttered sunlight

This is Hijuelos's way in *The Fourteen Sisters*: to gather, whenever possible, the outward contours of the moment, and then to sift significant moments one alongside another. Emotions are registered obliquely, either through summary or suggestion. We peer at his world as if through a lens.

Nelson emerges from these arrested moments as a gentle, mood-ridden man. He is increasingly subject to bouts of despair, which he tries to counteract by drinking. Mariela is shy, a dreamer. Though husband and wife return to America soon after their wedding, Mariela never abandons her language or her loyalty to certain customs. She comes to inhabit the shadows of the home, the book. And while the fifteen children exhibit the full range of passions and aptitudes, Hijuelos tends to focus most closely upon the lives of those who, like their parents, are prey to obscure longings and dissatisfactions. Principally, Margarita, who in marrying Lester Thompson becomes the puppet of his skewed sexual fancies, and Emilio, who arrives shortly before the midpoint of the novel.

Emilio's story is, in most respects, sad. Doted upon by so many sisters, and at the same time neglected by a father who draws ever deeper into his private gloom, he is charming but uncentered. Though he grows into a ruggedly good-looking man and enjoys some success as a second-string Hollywood actor, he cannot square his outward appearance with his inner sense of himself, with recurrent dreams in which he feels he possesses "insides made up of soft flower petals." As Margarita's story anchors the first part of the novel, so Emilio's gives shape to the second part. We follow his travails as a young would-be actor, his uneventful war years in Italy, his minor Hollywood success (he becomes a carousing buddy of Errol Flynn's), which is followed by marital tragedy and a long decline into alcoholism. His is an aggravated version of Nelson's despondency, and it is thus fitting that he is finally saved by his discovery of photography, the rudiments of which he once learned at his father's knee.

Alas, throughout both Margarita's and Emilio's narratives, we are held away at arm's length, denied the sort of access that fosters immersion. Though Hijuelos is a gifted storyteller, able to invest his scenarios with gratifying twists, we never lose the feeling as we read about one or another character that the real life of the book is elsewhere, about to be disclosed. And so, in a sense, it is. For as the myriad lives that were all getting underway in the opening chapters start to wind down, as we realize that time has swept the entire clan forward, from the decade of the 1920s into the '80s and '90s, we grasp Hijuelos's intent. Hijuelos is not writing the more conventional sort of chronicle in which intertwined lives are explored in isolation. Rather, we are to see the Montez O'Brien children as playing out a set of variations on a genetic theme. Along with physiological traits, they have inherited powerful temperamental predispositions. Character may be destiny, but in Hijuelos's book character is also family.

Suggestive as this is as a concept, it proves most difficult to execute as fiction, especially in the way Hijuelos has attempted. For by bringing forth a family of fifteen children, he makes it inevitable that he will have to focus on but a few members, leaving the others to the fate of wrap-up summaries in stray paragraphs. Yet it is the unfulfilled promise of those other lives that undercuts the complex integrity of the family portrait. The premise just cannot work.

Then, too, there is the related problem of resolutions. Having set so many different fates into motion, Hijuelos is obliged to see them through. The last third of the book is necessarily devoted to the tying up of threads: Nelson's death, Mariela's, and the declining momentum of the aging children. In these last chapters the Márquesian resonance all but overwhelms the prose. Hijuelos's staging of Nelson's last days, featuring a scene in which Nelson brings

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out his antiquated camera equipment to take Mariela's portrait, is a case in point:

> A passerby on the road would see an old man posing an old and patient woman in the yard, but that passerby would have no idea what Nelson was seeing through the camera lens: the sunny yard of a photography studio in Santiago de Cuba, circa 1900, and, seated before a tiled wall on a stool, a pretty woman with long black hair falling over her shoulders, an oval face serene with intelligence, the lady wearing a simple white dress with a pleated skirt and puff-shouldered, butterfly sleeves, a yellow bow at her waist.
>
> ... Then, behind the black cloth, he squeezed the pneumatic bulb for the last time in his life.

Here, certainly, the line between influence and imitation has been crossed. It is as if Hijuelos were writing the scene not like but *as* García Márquez. The displacement ultimately undermines the artistic authority of the novel.

As we have seen from all his work, including his first novel, *Our House in the Last World* (1983), Hijuelos is a writer gripped in equal measure by a vision of life's plenitude and of the remorseless passing of time. The earlier works showed him in command of a generously sensuous style that shifted easily between exterior and interior realms, between vigorously paced narration and lyrical reflection. Certainly he knows how to charge a scene, with eros, fear and trembling, whatever. This time out, inexplicably, he chose to saddle himself with a particularly unwieldy conceit. In creating the hyperbolic Montez O'Brien clan, he all but forced himself to adapt the stylistic devices of his Colombian master. Seen from one angle, the book is an homage; from another, an act of self-sabotage. Either way, let us hope that Hijuelos has finally come to terms with the burdens of inheritance.

SVEN BIRKERTS is the author of *American Energies: Essays on Fiction* (Morrow).

Out of the Dark

BY SANFORD SCHWARTZ

Sickert: Paintings
edited by Wendy Baron and Richard Shone

(Royal Academy of Arts, London, and Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam / Yale University Press, 365 pp., $60)

It's a shame that the Royal Academy's Walter Sickert exhibition will not travel to the United States, not only because the painter is unknown to us but because his work would look right at home here. Walter Sickert (1860-1942) has been seen twice in this country, at a gallery twenty-five years ago and in an exhibition of his prints at the Yale Center for British Art. If he is thought of at all, it is as an English painter whose formative years were somehow connected with Whistler and Degas and who went on to make dark, somber pictures of London interiors and theaters and barely brighter scenes of Venice and Dieppe.

The Sickert who emerges from the show and its valuable catalog, however, is the opposite of the imagined earnest realist. Far from being somber, the pictures displayed in this definitive exhibition (now at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam) present luscious combinations of colors, brushed on by a showy, assured master. And as much as the photographs of Bill Brandt, Sickert's pictures form an unhackneyed tour of English themes. Yes, there are paintings of continental tourist spots, but the larger impression is of an English pageant. We see music halls and music hall entertainers, pub crawlers, chars and the dreariness of north London bed-sitting-rooms, horse fairs and cockneys in bowler hats, royals and press lords, West End productions and Bloomsbury teas.

Yet despite the gusto of his hand and the Englishness of his images, we're not taken anywhere so much as into the mind of Walter Sickert. Whether they're small or quite large, Sickert's pictures have the presence of exercises, sketches. The longer a typical street scene is looked at, for example, the clearer its mechanical nature—its being an assemblage of sky, buildings, street and other elements—becomes. And the older Sickert got, the more wackily construct-like—and, oddly, the more immediate and powerful—his demonstrations became. There's a fullness and elasticity to Sickert's work—and a lack of literary sentiment—that put him in a different league from other twentieth-century English painters. But the more involving issue with him is the

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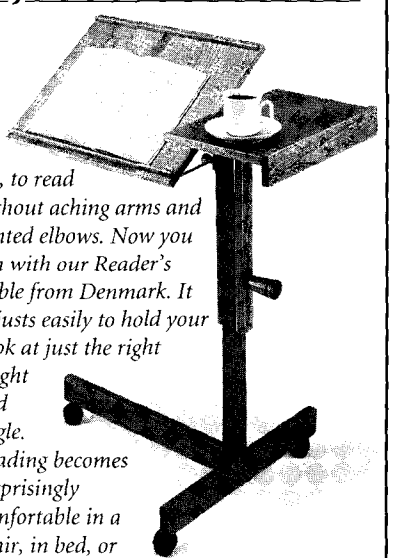

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way, like so many American and European artists of the last two or three decades, he played with and shaped the idea of what might be called disembodied beauty.

If Sickert is unknown in the United States, it may be because he has never been fully known in England. His reputation there is, well, evolving. In the 1920s and 1930s, after decades of being a figure primarily in the connecting worlds of art and literature, he emerged as the grand old man of English art. He was a frequent lecturer, and his appearance and antics were noted regularly in the press. He dressed in an out-of-date and theatrical way (he sported a variety of hats), and would appear one year clean shaven and the next with a full bushy beard. His use of photographs for the making of his paintings was also thought newsworthy. He was the subject of an admiring pamphlet by Virginia Woolf in 1934, and in 1941, the year before he died, he was given a major retrospective at the National Gallery. That same year Robert Emmons, a former student, produced an enormous biography of him.

Since then, books for a general audience, scholarly studies and exhibitions have appeared on occasion. And it's likely that anyone looking at this material has found himself caught up in the juicy busyness of it all. Sickert's biography is marked by engaging complexities from the start. He was born in Munich to a Danish father (who was an artist) and an Anglo-Irish mother, and he lived in Germany until his parents, who regularly made sojourns in France, settled for good in London when he was 8. He went on to produce a large body of paintings, drawings and prints and a sizeable amount of witty and stimulating criticism, as well as many letters to editors; to have three wives and at least one illegitimate child; to be fluent in three or four languages; to start, almost at the drop of a hat, one art school after another; and to join, preside over and quit a host of art groups, academies and councils. With, in addition, his appetite for constantly changing studios and his battery of theories and opinions about the art market, individual reputations and the techniques of picture-making, Sickert was a one-man art world.

Yet the English have been cautious and uncertain about Sickert. While he's sometimes described as the "most cosmopolitan" painter of his era in England, or even as one of the finest painters of his time pure and simple, there's rarely a sense that he might transcend his time. In many overviews of English art he takes his place as a painter from the turn of the century who, after being a pupil of Whistler and then the star-struck young friend of Degas, went on to nurse and cajole an emerging generation of modernist painters in London during the years before the First World War. Although the Tate owns a large collection of his pictures, he doesn't hold a crucially important place on its walls; it's easy to go to London and not find Sickert hanging anywhere. The one straightforward biography, Denys Sutton's *Walter Sickert* (1976), for instance, barely describes a Sickert painting, let alone discusses his significance as an artist.

The current Royal Academy show is a consequence, it seems, of a feeling that has been growing for some fifteen or so years that Sickert is a more considerable figure than had been said. This sense of him resulted in a show in 1981, prompted by the painter Frank Auerbach (who installed it) and the critic Richard Morphet, called "Late Sickert." The show's makers believed in particular that the pictures Sickert began making in his 60s, which were based largely on photographs, drastically called for a re-evaluation. These pictures had never figured much in his official story. Many hadn't been seen since they were shown in the 1930s. Even the painter's admirers over the years had thought them weak or preposterous.

Sickert had used photographs on and off since his earlier days, but around 1927 he began to base his paintings directly on them, and sometimes on Victorian black-and-white newspaper and magazine illustrations. He also now emphasized, far more than before, the artificiality of his paintings; he let show, for instance, the scaffolding, the squared-up lines beneath the image, which he had used to help transfer his photo or print onto canvas. This gave some paintings the slight aspect of posters that had been rushed out of the advertising studio before being finished.

For the first time in his life, Sickert began working consistently with large canvases. He would often write on the paintings—titles, or sayings, or the names of the photographers or illustrators he had borrowed from for the occasion. All these details gave his work a decided oddness, especially in the eyes of a public that had come to see him as a living link to the glory days of Impressionism. For the makers of the 1981 show, however, operating at a moment when painting was becoming an important artform for a new wave of artists in Europe and the United States, Sickert's late work, with its aggressive nonchalance about the process of picture making, was a kind of buried treasure.

Since that ground-breaking exhibition, Richard Shone, an editor at *The*

The Rainstick

for Rand and Beth

Upend the rainstick and what happens next
Is a music that you never would have known
To listen for. In a cactus stalk

Downpour, sluice-rush, spillage and backwash
Come flowing through. You stand there like a pipe
Being played by water, you shake it again lightly

And diminuendo runs through all its scales
Like a gutter stopping trickling. And now here comes
A sprinkle of drops out of the freshened leaves,

Then subtle little wets off grass and daisies;
Then glitter-drizzle, almost-breaths of air.
Upend the stick again. What happens next

Is undiminished for having happened once,
Twice, ten, a thousand times before.
Who cares if the music that transpires

Is the fall of grit or dry seeds through a cactus?
You are like a rich man entering heaven
Through the ear of a shower. Listen now again.

SEAMUS HEANEY

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Burlington Magazine, has gone on, in catalogs for shows devoted to aspects of Sickert's work and in *Walter Sickert* (1988), to re-evaluate the artist's entire career with an emphasis on his late painting. Shone writes with the strength and the keenness of someone who is out to persuade and to reveal. All along, Sickert's work, and his numerous circles of colleagues and friends, have been scrupulously researched and gracefully described by the art historian Wendy Baron. Shone and Baron together selected this Royal Academy show, the first to put equal weight on every aspect of Sickert's career. It's the first time all of Sickert can be properly judged, and the result bears out the hunch that he is a more radical and commanding figure than is commonly thought.

Sickert is also a maddeningly odd and elusive artist, and one whose work cries out to be placed in more than the English scene. He wasn't Picasso, nor was he, on a less protean level, Max Beckmann. There's something wayward about how Sickert happened to paint this subject and not that. And in a sense he never divulged who he was; a viewer feels an emptiness, a withholding of some note, in him. Yet Sickert had a goal, which was to make a certain kind of painting, and he pursued it with an ever-expanding zeal for fifty years. You've entered the realm of a big-time artist when you consider his rambunctious and challenging body of work.

Sickert is difficult to place in the evolution of modern painting. It's hard even to rank the various phases of his own work. He was, in a way, a refiner of Impressionism. Even when he painted views of squares and streets in Dieppe and Venice, his pictures look like the work of someone whose point was to take Impressionism indoors. He built his rock on precepts and approaches taken rather baldly from Whistler and Degas. Sickert's notion of making a picture an orchestration of muddy tones and artificial bright ones came from Whistler, and his emphasis on odd angles of vision and on the need to paint from one's drawings, in the studio, not from life, came from Degas.

Chronologically, however, Sickert was a member of the Post-Impressionist generation. He was roughly a contemporary of Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard and Vuillard, and of Munch and Ensor, and temperamentally he was closer to them than to his mentors. Although his influence on subsequent generations of English painters probably came most through his ambiguous scenes of couples in grungy interiors (an idea that he developed from Degas), Sickert's primary theme, like Toulouse-Lautrec's, was theater life, the life of popular culture.

Sickert at first wanted to be an actor, and around the age of 20 he toured the provinces, sometimes in Shakespearean roles. His acting career was brief, yet he never lost his taste for the stage. His various views of music halls, vaudeville stars, theater audiences and, later in his life, actors in London in the 1930s might be called the core of his work. His sweetest and most endearing pictures, the ones that transport a viewer fastest to another place, are of music hall audiences, especially those of the young men in bowler hats and dark suits who fidget and lean down from the galleries.

Sickert's color, though, is the revelation of the Royal Academy show. At first sight his views of Venice and Dieppe and his London interiors are as murky as his reputation would have them. Yet after a little acclimatizing, Sickert's somberness is forgotten; your eye becomes used to his rarely encountered tones, and you look forward to his peculiar blues, greens, purples and violets, his unexpected orange, aqua, maroon. Like Vuillard, Sickert was for much of his life the maker of a lush, powdery easel picture in which brilliant and quite disparate colors play against each other in a small space.

There's an Expressionist power to Sickert's images, too. He's a sly, psychological Expressionist, a creator of a mood in which some indefinable thing has gone awry. In his portraits or interiors that include people there's often a weirdly gleeful note that is fascinating because it comes from nowhere. When a woman smiles, not only her teeth but the spaces between them can be seen, or there will be a salacious glint in her eyes, and either way she's left seeming awkward, exposed. A sense of dread can permeate Sickert's color and light. In some of his Venice scenes, where the sky might be a particular beautiful yet oppressive darkish blue, we don't know if it's daytime or nighttime. These are images that the governess in *The Turn of the Screw* might have seen.

Yet Sickert is most distinctive not for his Frenchness or his Northernness, but for what might be called his Americanness—that is, for his adamant interest in getting the job done right and his letting himself get carried away by craft considerations. What you respond to in a Sickert painting is, basically, a performance of his hand and mind. From his earliest days Sickert sought better and better methods to make a picture. By the time he was in his late 30s, he had formulated a method for painting successfully. Putting it simply, he started with a straightforward, fast drawing of something, being careful to retain on paper all the awkward lines and mistakes. His aim was to get a rough, working sense of how and where light and dark intersected in the scene before him.

This drawing would then be a combination template and road map for the painting. The drawing would be squared up and thereby made ready to be enlarged onto a canvas, where its camouflage-like, patchy self would be the basis for the color to come. The actual painting was a layering-in process, with darker tones going down first and lighter, more brilliant ones last. In the finished painting we look at layers of rough-edged, squiggly and furry lines and passages that have been dashed down over numerous underlying layers. Sickert's pictures sometimes resemble what you see through a windshield in intermittent rain, when rain drops, grime, dust and wet streaks are all part of the scene before you.

By the late 1920s Sickert had stopped making drawings and used photographs instead, but he used them the same way. He would work from photos clipped from newspapers, or he or his wife, Thérèse Lessore, who was also a painter, would take photographs, or he would send out a photographer. An informal, spontaneous shot was always what was desired. Sickert would use the flow of jagged-edged lights and darks in it the same way that he used the shadings in the drawings he painted from.

Sickert evolved for himself an equally passive and daring system. He was saying, in part, that painting was no more

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than a demonstration of his hand, that what he actually painted was meaningless. That Sickert decided to make photographs a necessary ingredient of his art, though, that he saw they could be handled the same way as drawings, was in itself momentous. He was letting his sense of how to make a picture take him into a new terrain.

Sickert's odd position, standing in the center of many developments in the European art of his time and at the same moment remaining unconnected to them, no doubt relates to the circumstances of his early years—to the cosmopolitanism of his childhood. But perhaps the key (if there is a key) to Sickert's phantom-like presence is another aspect of his background. His father's father was a painter and decorator, and his father was a painter who spent many years supplying drawings to a German newspaper. And from being the third-generation artist in his family, Sickert seems to have developed a romance with the idea of art as a profession, a job, a kind of trade. In all his endeavors, anyway, he continually mediated between his father's world—the world of the commercial illustrator, the no-nonsense pro—and the fine artist whose work was destined for the museum.

THE SERVANT OF ABRAHAM: SELF PORTRAIT, 1929

Certainly much of Sickert's criticism was about the need to see every sort of art as something that begins as handiwork and that owes much of its character to the commercial needs it springs from. (*A Free House!*, the collection of his writing published in 1947, isn't in print, but a number of his pieces are included in the Royal Academy catalog.) And long before he started using Victorian illustrations as a basis for paintings, he was known for his opinion that certain nineteenth-century popular draftsmen were every bit the equal of any serious artist of any period.

Sickert's heightened sense of being a member of a guild may help to explain the unusual degree to which he was a student and a follower of Whistler and Degas. It might explain, too, the irregular contour of his life—the way the pictures that he was making even when he was in his 50s seem too circumscribed for the ambition and energy that's felt in his work as a whole. He appears to comment on this in a self-portrait of 1907 called *The Juvenile Lead*. There, peering out furtively from under hat and glasses, a middle-aged man presents the tight corner that a disciple who also has a mind can find himself in.

But Sickert's romance with professionalism is also, of course, what gives his work its hallucinatory charge. Sickert's deepest subject, I think, was pictorial art in itself—the conventions and the ideas behind any and all kinds of pictures. This is why his late paintings especially, in the way they've been conceived, or in the way they actually look, suggest Chuck Close, Andy Warhol, Alex Katz, Malcolm Morley, Gerhard Richter and other contemporary artists. Sickert says in his art what they say in theirs: "Now you see what a photograph, or a movie image, or an ad—or a reproduction of anything—looks like. Now you have the poetry of the thing."

As with almost every issue associated with him, the verdict on the two Sickerts, the young and middle-aged man who based his paintings on drawings and the old man who based them on photographs, is complicated. When the artist, in the late 1920s, traded drawings for photos as his springboard, he meant something big by the move. He had been seriously ill and fairly inactive for some time before. Now, after two years of thinking about it, he changed his name. Henceforth he wanted to be known publicly by his middle name, Richard, not Walter. And a new freedom gradually came into his work. His images became more distinctive. There's more of an individual to grab hold of.

This doesn't mean that Sickert's art when he worked from drawings constitutes one big prelude. Some of his most solid and satisfying pictures, for instance, are theater scenes dating from the late 1880s, when he was starting out. *Brighton Pierrots* (1915), a scene of entertainers in straw boaters on an outdoor stage, facing plenty of empty seats on a summer evening when the sky is a fuzzy orange, must be one of the most beautiful English paintings ever made. A large theater interior from the same time, *The New Bedford*, isn't far behind. The list could go on easily.

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And yet Sickert without his late phase is like Philip Guston without his rediscovery of the Klan. What Sickert seems to have rediscovered was his own past as an actor, or performer—or performance itself. In his theater paintings from his first thirty or so years, actors or entertainers were never as important to him as the theaters they performed in, or as the hooting, or rapt, or indifferent audiences. Sickert seems to go to lengths not to present performers straight on. They're always seen at a distance, or, caught in a mirror, they're immaterial. And in his portraits and interiors with figures from these years there's little sense of the Sickert who saw individuals, on stage or not, as bestriding gods. When he changed gears in the late 1920s, though, Sickert suddenly emerged as an important figure painter. Many of his best later paintings are of actors or actresses or of people who have the presence of actors—big actors seen in characteristic moments.

Among the most magnetic are three self-portraits, all with direct biblical overtones. They're not simply sensitive or introspective self-portraits by a particular older artist. Sickert really acts in them. He now had a full beard, grizzly and squarish, with wisps of white hair floating around the top of his head. In paintings that are completely different in color, design and size, he looks like a geezer, a demonic ship's captain, the Almighty himself. In *The Servant of Abraham* (1929) we see, very close up, a blurred face, at once benevolent and fierce. The painting isn't taken as ironic—perhaps because the head is falling away, at an angle, and because Sickert has written the painting's title with a casual yet legible script right along the bottom of the canvas, so that the work resembles a blurry color photograph on which someone has breezily scribbled something. Here is a compellingly prophetic old man who is also somehow a citizen of contemporary London.

In his late portraits Sickert produces simultaneously the sense of an official, commissioned portrait; a parody of such a thing; and an artwork that, with its ghostly, inside-out spirit, makes the sitter himself or herself more interesting than a conventional portrait would. His life-size full-length of Edward VIII, the man who, shortly after the picture was made, became the Duke of Windsor, is a high point. Sickert's picture (there are two slightly different versions) shows Edward, who had just become king, as he steps out of a carriage. He's wearing an elegant red and blue regimental dress uniform and holds the regiment's large bearskin hat up before his chest. His black armband is for his recently departed father, George V, and it, plus Edward's tentative face, may be what makes us feel that Sickert has captured the man's whole sad story, abdication and all.

Sickert's large, narrow picture of the youthful king is, to an unusual degree with him, about the subtle distortions that are part of news photos. The way Edward seems both to float and to scurry by, and the peculiar narrowness of his legs—these details clearly derive from Sickert's faithful transferal of a news photo's abbreviations into paint, and they're part of what makes the picture mesmerizing. Like Warhol's images of Jackie Kennedy after the assassination, Sickert's picture seems to be about our experience of life as presented in newspapers. We feel we've entered the world of the newspapers of the time, and are experiencing the very moment when a big, public event affected us personally. *H. M. King Edward VIII* wouldn't be out of place at an upcoming Whitney biennial—and this is meant as a compliment. This painting has the presence of a long lost father. It's as if Sickert, in 1936, 76 years old and isolated in his work from artists in England and everywhere else, had made a monument in a language of his own, and half a century later that language had become a lingua franca in a very different art world.

Sickert will probably come to be far better known through the Royal Academy's catalog, and it does him justice. With contributions principally by Shone and Baron, the catalog brings together for the first time a large number of color reproductions of Sickert's work with the considerable amount of documentary material on him and on individual pictures that has been amassed. Paintings are shown along with other versions of themselves, plus prints, drawings and photographs of sites that bear on the paintings. The result is the best sense so far of Sickert's heft, of how big a world his pictures form.

It should be noted that, with all the paintings reproduced full page, the catalog gives a slightly distorted image of Sickert's work. (This happens in many art books, of course.) The pictures are similar in impact, which means that unless you are familiar with Sickert's art firsthand you ought to look at the dimensions. Otherwise the chief drama of his work, his transformation from an intense, intimate painter into an expansive, epochal one—from the Juvenile Lead into the Servant of Abraham—might be missed.

SANFORD SCHWARTZ is the author most recently of *Christen Købke* (Timken).

TRB *continued from page 4*

care of the problem automatically?

At least three approaches seem to be available. First, re-education. Amitai Etzioni, in his forthcoming book, *The Spirit of Community*, despairs of any attempt to put a "notch" in the First Amendment to allow the prohibition of offensive speech. Instead, he suggests, why not require offenders "to attend classes that will teach them civility?" This may make some sense in a university setting (which is the context of Etzioni's discussion). As a remedy for "street harassment," it seems pathetically inadequate. Even if we could send harassers to the moral equivalent of traffic school, it would probably provoke more ridicule than re-education. There's something creepy about the idea of state-sponsored re-education classes, anyway.

Second, as Bowman suggests, we might give "targets" of street harassment the right to sue for civil damages, perhaps for "intentional infliction of emotional distress." Yet this seems a recipe for disastrous litigiousness. Do we really want every woman who feels "dissed" to be able to require a judge to determine the "reasonableness" of the dissing?

The third, and least unsatisfactory, approach is to delegate the required semi-aesthetic judgments to the police by making "street harassment" a misdemeanor, just as other sorts of public disturbances are misdemeanors. Litigiousness would be avoided by having a third party (a cop) decide on the spot whether civility had been violated. Pennsylvania already has a law penalizing anyone who intentionally "engages in a course of conduct or repeatedly commits acts which alarm or seriously annoy" another person "and which serve no legitimate purpose." The trouble, as Bowman notes, is that this sort of ordinance typically applies only to those who repeatedly harass a single person, not to those who harass a series of passers-by. But this defect can be easily remedied. If it's not a violation of the First Amendment to arrest a man who calls one pedestrian a "bitch" fifteen times, why is it a violation to arrest him if he says it once to fifteen different pedestrians?

Few police departments would actually arrest any but the most egregious violators, of course—though female police officers might have interestingly different priorities in this regard. But the law would at least give cops a basis for telling offenders to "move along." Most importantly, the law might also stimulate the cultural change that everybody, including Bowman, agrees is the only real solution to the problem. Until then, her argument will be hard to dismiss.

MICKEY KAUS

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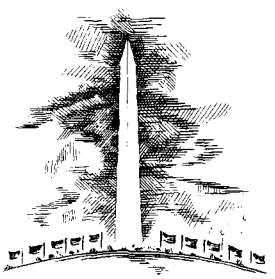
WASHINGTON DIARIST

K-Mort

IT'S NICE TO HEAR, FROM *THE NEW York Times* and elsewhere, that the young Clintonians think they have converted Washington into a trendy place to live, in just six weeks. I don't know much about hip night spots, but I can tell you that for people a little older than Bill and Hillary—and a generation older than many White House aides—the cosmopolitanization of Washington has been going on a long time. Twenty years ago, when Washington had but one Mexican restaurant, La Fonda, a bunch of friends and I decided we could make a killing opening another serving homemade flour tortillas, refried beans with chorizo and chicken and mole. Nothing ever came of the idea, of course, but it was a good one. La Fonda still exists, but now there are close to a dozen good Mexican restaurants around, many of them packed. When I came to Washington twenty-five years ago, the town was a lot like Little Rock is today. The people were either black or white. There was little in the way of theater or music, and people stopped their cars when the light turned red. Washington is still not New York or even Chicago, but foreign wars have given us ethnic neighborhoods. When we first arrived, my wife tried to get a job as a juvenile probation counselor on the strength of being fluent in Spanish. She got the job, but she was told no one in these parts spoke Spanish. Now, there is a large Salvadoran community. Also, Southeast Asians, Afghans and Iranians. Before the Kennedy Center opened in 1971, Washington had one theater. There's still no Broadway or off-Broadway, but we've now got five or six decent theaters. We also have more art galleries. In the past year or two we have finally got two first-rate bread bakeries, Marvelous Market and the Uptown Bakery, and even some passable bagel shops.

EVER ON THE LOOKOUT FOR NEW ways for someone else to make money—and at the same time enrich my life—I've assembled a little list of things Washington does not have, but ought to. One is Zabar's, the Upper West Side's fantastic food emporium. We have gourmet shops, but they tend to be prissy, Georgetown-y places, not people's places. Rodman's, an expanded drug store on Wisconsin Avenue, was on its way to becoming a Washington Zabar's, with dozens of different pastas and olive oils and exotic condiments available, but it has decided it would rather be a big liquor store. Besides Zabar's, somebody could get rich in Washington by importing a real New York deli and a Korean fruit stand or two. Street vendors do sell pretzels, hot dogs (non-kosher) and, in warm weather only, fruit. But they aren't anywhere as good as what's available in New York. Nowhere in Washington can you find a really good, large bran muffin to eat with your coffee. In New York, there's a place nearly every block. Somebody could get really rich combining all of the above—and, while they're at it, selling Philadelphia cheese steaks and Chicago-style Italian-beef sandwiches as well.



WASHINGTON ALSO needs a big band/nostalgia radio station and a first-rate record store. Washington has WWDC, 1260 A.M., which broadcasts a format called "A.M. Only"—hits of the '40s, '50s and '60s for the benefit of people in the 45-to-64 age group. I admit, I'm in the range, but I don't want to hear Barry Manilow sing "Somewhere in the Night," followed by Peggy Lee with "I've Got the World on a String," followed by "Love Story" by Andy Williams. Peggy Lee is great, but I also want Tommy Dorsey, early Frank Sinatra, Duke Ellington, Joya Sherrill, Helen O'Connell, Artie Shaw and Sarah Vaughn. As a treat, I'd like this station to play six classic versions in a row of "I'll Be Seeing You" and half a morning of Cole Porter. I'm betting that a station programmed my way—maybe with NPR to boot—would be a hit. Los Angeles has such a station, KPPC, 89.3. Then again, New York used to have WNEW, but it's gone off the air. Meantime, Washington has Tower Records (who doesn't?), but try to find a tape there of the Liza Minelli-Joel Gray version of "Cabaret." You can find the sound tracks to most recent movies or T.V. miniseries, but very few Broadway musicals. To dependably get what you want, you have to go to Footlight Records or Colony Records in New York.

I MAKE NO CLAIMS TO ROYALTIES, but I'm pleased that over the years a number of money-making and/or life-enhancing invention ideas of mine, some first promoted on this page, have made it onto the market. For instance, the Hammacher Schlemmer catalog sells lap-counting devices (wall- and finger-mounted), making it possible to meditate while swimming instead of having to keep track of your distance. The other day I even saw a portable car wash at work, although I have yet to see it making someone a fortune cleaning peoples' cars at a mall while they shop inside. But no one has yet developed my Harassment Stopper—a pin that a woman can wear to work or a job interview containing a tiny microphone that broadcasts to a tape recorder back at her desk or in her purse. I thought of it after the Clarence Thomas hearings. Senator Bob Packwood's shenanigans make it all the more marketable. Once Stoppers become widely used, somebody can market a lower-priced model that just looks like the genuine thing and deters.

OTHER IDEAS OF MINE, alas, have also gotten nowhere. No auto manufacturer as yet has had the wit to install a drink-holder big enough to hold a coffee mug and save a driver from sloshing all over his upholstery. Attending the pre-Inaugural gala at Washington's Capitol Centre, I noted anew that even the most progressive impresarios have yet to build women's bathrooms half-again larger than men's to take account of the longer time women have to spend there. Male chauvinist architects originally may have been to blame for not thinking of women's needs, but by this time even they should have realized how much time they waste waiting while their female companions stand in line.

AS AN ADVOCATE OF EXOGAMY (interethnic marriage) as a solution to America's social woes (see "Blenders," TNR, September 21, 1992), I've been delighted to see so many depictions of interracial romance in popular culture of late. Arthur Spiegelman's painting on the cover of *The New Yorker* showing a Hasidic man embracing a dreadlocked black woman was attacked as disrespectful of Orthodox Jewish law, but the sentiment behind it was good. The movie *The Bodyguard*, centering on the romance of Kevin Costner and Whitney Houston, got terrible reviews—unfairly, I thought—but happily treated the interracial aspect without comment. *Love Field* features Michelle Pfeiffer involved with Dennis Haybert. And in *The Crying Game*, of course, love is interracial, among other things. Of course, the movies and T.V. have yet to give us a warm, lasting interracial marriage to serve as a cultural example. But wait. It'll happen.

MORTON KONDRACKE

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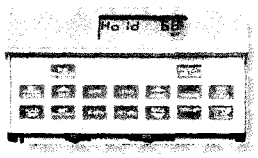

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It was an unlikely alliance.

But when five state governments, two wildlife conservation groups and one energy company came together, 32 species of threatened wildfowl secured a brighter future.

The partnership called itself The Playa Lakes Joint Venture. Its mission, to enhance and protect the wetlands resource of the Playa Lakes region critical to wildlife.

Boosted by grants from private landowners, state wildlife agencies in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico and Colorado, with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited, Inc., matched donations from Phillips Petroleum to protect vital avian breeding and migrating habitats. Habitats that with resources and restoration could slow the dramatic decline of millions of ducks, geese and cranes from lack of water.

It was an unlikely alliance. But when five state governments, two wildlife conservation groups and one energy company came in with concern and came out with solutions, it seemed more inspired than unlikely, after all.

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For more information about what we are doing to protect our environment, write: Playa Lakes, Phillips Petroleum Company, 16C4 Phillips Building, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74004.

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